

350 5/14 A

5/14 A

# THE BHAGAVAD GITA

---

## THE SONG OF LIFE

---

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND  
EXPLANATORY NOTES

BY

T. L. VASWANI

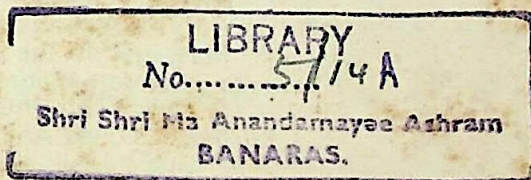
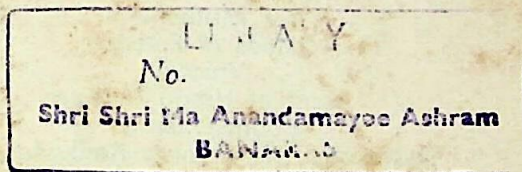






5/14A

THE BHAGAVAD GITA :  
THE SONG OF LIFE





*Also by T. L. Vaswani*

Krishna : The Saviour  
Krishna's Flute  
The Ancient Murli  
My Master  
The Divine Spark  
Religion and Culture  
Wisdom of the Rishis  
Diary of a Disciple  
Glimpses  
The Vision of India  
Atmagnan or Life in the Spirit  
The Secret of Asia  
A Pilgrim's Faith  
Thus Have I Learnt  
Builders of Tomorrow  
My Motherland  
Apostles of Freedom  
Voices  
Spirit of Hindu Culture  
Bodhi Dharma  
Youth and the Coming Renaissance  
In the Sikh Sanctuary  
Quest (Poems)  
Youth and the Nation  
Witness of the Ancient  
Awake ! Young India !  
The Aryan Ideal  
Message of the Birds  
Desert Voices  
India's Adventure  
Krishna : Stories And Parables  
Gita : Meditations  
A Prophet of the People  
The Face of the Buddha  
In the Footsteps of the Buddha  
Saint Mira  
Rishi Dayanand  
Tukaram : Poet and Prophet  
Heart-Beats (Poems)  
Gita : A Bible of Humanity  
The Voice Of The Voiceless Ones  
The Rishi  
Kindle the Light  
The Great-Souled Gandhi  
The Heart of the Gita  
Gandhi: the Man of the Ages  
The Life Beautiful



**EAST AND WEST SERIES**

**[ Nos. 147-148 ]**

**THE  
BHAGAVAD GITA :**

**THE SONG OF LIFE**

English Translation and  
Explanatory Notes

LIBRARY  
5/14A  
Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee Ashram  
BANARAS.

By

**T. L. VASWANI**

*ISSUED ON THE OCCASION OF*

**Sri T. L. VASWANI'S 90th Birthday [ 25-11-69**

By

**GITA PUBLISHING HOUSE,**

**Mira Nagar, 10 Sadhu Vaswani Path Poona-1, (India)**



### **IMPORTANT**

Kindly note that this is a combined issue for the two months, December 1969 and January 1970.

Our next issue will be out in the month of February, 1970.

The current issue covers the first nine chapters of the Bhagavad Gita. The next issue will cover the remaining nine chapters.

*—The Manager*

---

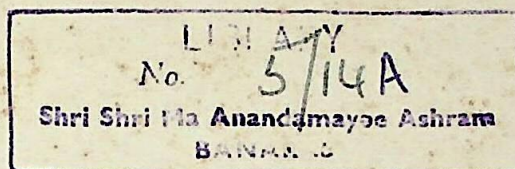
Printed by P. H. Ramchandani at Lokasangraha Press, 1786, Sadashiv Peth, Poona-30, and published by him from Gita Publishing House, 10, Sadhu Vaswani Path, Poona-1.

*Owned by : Kumari Shanti T. Vaswani*

*Editor : J. P. Vaswani*

**This issue : Rs. 2.50 or 5 s. or \$ 1.00.**





## CONTENTS

Editor's Note	...	...	...	7
Introduction	...	...	..	11
Introductory Note	...	...	...	21
The Loneliness of Arjuna ( Chapter I )	...			27
The Teaching Begins ( Chapter II )	...			40
The Path of Action ( Chapter III )	...			60
The Secret Doctrine ( Chapter IV )	...			75
The Path of Renunciation ( Chapter V )	...			88
The Path of Meditation ( Chapter VI )	...			97
The Cycle of Manifestation ( Chapter VII )	...			117
The Path of Light ( Chapter VIII )	...			126
The Supreme Mystery ( Chapter IX )	...			137





## EDITOR'S NOTE

The Bhagavad Gita is the most beloved scripture of the Indian people. For fifty centuries\*, some of the holiest and noblest of India's men and women have turned to it for inspiration and guidance in daily living. And the great thinkers of India, the great Acharyas, have paid the reverent homage of their hearts to this ancient scripture, as to no other book in the world. The Gita has given consolation to untold millions who have aspired to a life of freedom and fulfilment.

The Gita has devotees all over the world. It has been translated into many languages. And some of the world's greatest thinkers have paid glowing tributes to the Gita. Emerson always had a copy of the Gita on his table. He referred to it as an "empire of thought." Schlegel, on reading the Gita, broke into a rapture of ecstasy and exclaimed:—"Hail to thee, author of the mighty poem, whose oracles lift up the soul, in joy ineffable, toward all that is sublime, eternal, divine! Full of veneration, I salute thee above all singers, and I worship unceasingly the trace of thy footsteps." Romain Rolland, the Irish poet A. E. (George Russell), Dr. Humboldt and many others in many lands have paid feeling tributes to the Gita and to the Singer of the Gita. Count Keyserling regarded the Gita as the greatest philosophic poem in the world's literature.

---

\*A number of scholars believe that the Gita belongs to the fifth century, B. C. But, according to the Indian tradition, the Gita was revealed five thousand and seventy years ago.



To Beloved Dada (Sri T. L. Vaswani), however, the Gita was more than a "philosophic poem." Philosophy, he said, cannot plumb the depths that are within. Philosophy cannot satisfy the deepest longing of the human soul. Philosophy cannot take you to God. Vast and endless is knowledge : who can know all?

The Gita cannot be understood aright by the man who "trades in words." Words are easy : life is needed,—the dedicated life. The Gita is a revelation. And revelation cannot be grasped by the unaided intellect. The wisdom of the Gita is revealed in the heart of him who dedicates his life to the Lord.

"Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee!" The deepest longing of the human heart is to be one with the One without a second. For this something more than "philosophical knowledge" is needed,—something more even than the formal worship which we offer to God in temples and churches. A man may be "religious" and still be far from God. So Sri Krishna says:—

This be My word Supreme to thee,  
O Arjuna!

Let go thy rites and writ duties :  
Come to Me for single refuge!

Bring thy heart to Me!

Fix thy thoughts on Me!

Serve Me! Worship Me!

Cling in faith and love and reverence to Me!  
So shalt thou come to Me!

And I shall free thee

From the bondage of sin!

Walking the way of "loving surrender," man may reach God and be one with Him. To be one with God is not to run away from the world. Be *in* the world, Arjuna, but be not *of* the world. Act! But in action attain to heights of "actionlessness." Act in God : act as an instrument of God. Therefore offer



all your action to the Lord. Do everything for the love of God. Or, as Beloved Dada said, "in every act kindle the light of love." For love will lift us above "good and evil" into the freedom which belongs to the children of God.

The Gita's emphasis, therefore, is on life. Not he who reads the sacred scripture, nor he who recites *slokas* from the Gita, nor even he who delivers illuminating discourses on the Gita, but he who lives in accordance with the teaching of the Gita, is dear to the Lord. The sacred Name, "Krishna," may be on my lips, but if my life does not bear witness to the Lord of Love, if in my heart there is the sense of separation and there is cruelty or rancour or hatred, and if the Face of Krishna does not dwell with me, if my heart does not throb in sympathy with those who are in suffering and pain, if I do not share my goods with the poor and needy, with "the least of the little ones," I am far from the Light.

For years together, Beloved Dada studied the Gita, interpreted the teaching of the Gita, meditated on its sublime thought. He became one with the Gita. To many of us, indeed, he was a living Gita. On meeting him, many exclaimed:—"Here is an embodiment of the Gita."

Beloved Dada spoke on the Gita : and he wrote much on the Gita. I have with me heaps of his manuscripts, not yet published. From them, I have compiled a brief commentary on the Gita which is given in the following pages. Some mistakes must inevitably have crept in : they are my mistakes. And I seek refuge in the thought that I am not a scholar, and that the Master accepts the broken offerings of a loving heart.

The Gita, the Song of the Lord, is essentially the Song of Life. It shows how man (the *jiva*),—who lives a life of separation,—may be united with the Source. Man has been separated from the Eternal in whom is his Home : hence his restlessness. Why



was he separated? When was he separated? How was he separated? Who knows? Who can tell? But there is a path which man may take to retrace his steps back to the Homeland, where is his true Peace. And the Gita speaks to us of this Path, this Way. The Way is to be *trodden*, not spoken about. Step by step, must man move on the Path, until the wanderer reaches his Home.

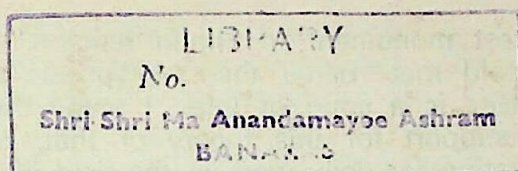
Three important words need to be noted. The first is the *Atman*, the Spirit, our true Home. The second is *prakriti*, the cosmos, in which we find ourselves. And the third is yoga, the way walking which the *jiva* may return to the true Homeland.

The *jiva* is in exile here. We all are in exile. Our Home is elsewhere : and this Home is calling us. Our Home is the Spirit,—the *Atman* of the Gita, the "Kingdom of Heaven," of Jesus. Coming into this world of name and form, entering into the dimensions of space and time, the *jiva* has got entangled. There is the play between *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, says the Gita. And the play goes on! And the *jiva* has got entangled in this play. How may the *jiva* get out of it to reach his Home? How? By yoga, says the Gita. The Gita is a text-book of yoga. Yoga literally means "union." It is the way of union, re-union, the way which we may tread to be re-united with the Source. This way is interpreted in the following pages.

The Gita has an answer to the problems and perplexities of our excited, agitated age. For the problems of social, national and international reconstruction will not be solved without an appreciation of those deeper values of life which the Gita shows are the very structure of Reality. A new Indian nation, a new social order, a new civilisation must be built in the essential teachings of the Gita. The wisdom of the Gita is the hope of a new humanity.

J. P. VASWANI





## INTRODUCTION

The Gita is a song : and a song is a synthesis. The Gita is music : its many notes are blended, one with the other, in a beautiful whole. A Hindu teacher of wisdom rightly says :—"All the Upanishads are the cows, the Lord Himself is the Milker, Arjuna is the calf, those of purified understanding are the drinkers of the milk, the supreme nectar of the Gita."

In the Bhagavad Gita, philosophy bursts into Song. It is, perhaps, the greatest philosophical poem in the world's literature.

The objective yoga of the Vedas and the subjective yoga of the Upanishads are taken up in the synthesis of the Gita. I know of no other scripture which is, in so rich a measure, a scripture of synthesis. The Gita grows out of a vision of supreme synthesis.

The Gita flows from the very heart of Ancient Wisdom. It flowed from India to other nations. It will flow again in the New Age. In this faith I work.

From India, Ancient Wisdom flowed to Assyria and Egypt, to Judea, Greece and Rome, to Tibet and China, to Korea and Japan.

In the morning of history was given the wisdom of the Gita. It was given in the cradle of the Race. Let the culture of India be judged by the Gita.

The Gita is not, to me, a text-book in abstract metaphysic. The Gita I interpret as a song-offering of the Lord of love to humanity. Men have turned to it for theories, systems, theologies, cold abstract speculations. I read it for spiritual inspiration. Dr. Thomas regards the Gita as "the richest and still the



greatest monument to Hindu religion."

I hold that better than metaphysic is life. To me the Gita is a song of Life. I study the Gita not to find support for this theory or that, but to receive inspiration for daily work in the field of life.

I study the Gita not as a document but as a song of creative life,—a song of the Spirit. Systems and theologies are products of the mind. But there are, I submit, higher values than what the mind reveals. The Gita subordinates the mind to the Atman. The categories of the mind will not take us beyond a mechanical order. The organic order,—that of life,—is revealed by the Atman, the Spirit.

I know not if many of us realise the value of this great scripture,—the Gita. Discard many libraries of books, if you will, but read this wonderful book, the Gita. In it many, in East and West, find the strength and inspiration of life.

I remember what an American lady wrote to me, many years ago. She happened to read my two little books,—*Krishna : the Saviour* and *Krishna's Flute*. The books interpret the life and message of the Lord of Love. And this American lady wrote to me that she found what she had been seeking in the Lord's life and message. I know of an English lady. She met me sometime ago. She showed me a beautiful bound copy of the Gita. She loved it so much, she said, that she always carried it in a beautiful bag, even while travelling. The Gita, she urged, was a rich treasure-house of the wisdom of life.

The message of the Gita was given by Sri Krishna to Arjuna. Arjuna, young in years, rich in idealism, strong in the power of concentration,—Arjuna represents youth. And the message of the Gita has a special value for the young. It is not for those who lack self-control.

Aristotle said his "Ethics" was meant for the "continent," not for those who would be swayed by passion. Every passion is a distraction. Youth



must exercise self-restraint. Not numbers but quality is what the ancient teachers emphasised. They realised that the individual was the key to life's problem. Decadence in life,—is our malady, today, because we have emphasised quantity rather than quality, mass rather than the individual. Not a little of modern restlessness is a sign of disintegration. And disintegration is a result of spiritual decadence.

Modern India suffers from the illusion of numbers. In ancient India the *ashramas* aimed at training select individuals. Regeneration of nations and communities is through individuals. Not in surface extension but in depth of the soul is the secret of regeneration.

Sri Krishna taught the wisdom of the Gita to Arjuna, a great individual, a young man of culture and character, of *shakti* and *bhakti*. The Gita will not do good to those who choose to stick to *rajas* or *tamas* in life. There must be some *sattvic* aspiration. This is a conspicuous quality in the character of Arjuna.

On the Kurukshetra, we read, was the Gita delivered by the Lord. Kurukshetra means "area of action" or "field of work." The Gita gives us a noble message of work, a gospel of action. Act! Act! But action is not aggression. Action should grow out of *tapasya* (self-discipline), not the desire to enjoy or dominate. The soul's evolution is through *tapas*. And a true *tapasvin* is a *sipahi*. He does not run away from life. He does not escape into a jungle. He stands beneath the "flag" of the Lord as a *sipahi*, ever eager to do His Will.

The message of the Kurukshetra is :—"Be *sipahis*!" Long have you suffered, O children of Bharata! from the sin of softness. I ask you to be soldiers of the Ideal,—*sipahis* in the *Krishna-sena*,—the Army of the Lord. Look! He stands holding in His Hands the Flag, and He calls you to stand beneath it! Be *sipahis* of the Spirit! Be *sipahis* of truth and love!

But *karma* or action is but one mark of the message of the Gita. The other two marks are knowledge and



*bhakti*. The emphasis on knowledge is a mark of the *gnana* school of the Gita, associated with the great name of Sri Shankaracharya. Yamunacharya was the first great interpreter of the *bhakti* school. And Lokamanya Tilak was, in our days, the great exponent of the school of *karma*, action. *Gnana, bhakti, karma*,—one or the other of these three being emphasised, we get the three schools of the Gita,—the *gnana-marga*, the *bhakti-marga* and the *karma-marga*.

The question arises :—Why are the *margas* three? Why not less? Why not more? The *margas* of the Gita, let me submit, are meant for those in the cycle of human evolution. In the evolution of the individual, there are three stages. Let me indicate them in the order of emergence or development.

The first is the stage of *karma* or activity. See how the child begins with some *karma* (action). The child cries, crawls, falls again and again, rises up again and again, walks, stretches out its feeble hands and feet to hold things. The child *acts*.

As the boy grows into youth, a new stage starts. After *karma* (action) comes knowledge. The youth puts questions, wants to understand, to know many things concerning the earth and heavens, concerning history and life.

Then comes the third stage,—that of *bhakti* or love. After you have worked and tried to know for many years, what do you find? Hopes disappointed! Plans frustrated! Purposes unfulfilled! Dear ones snatched away! Then *vairagya* sets in. *Vairagya* is the seed of which the flower is *bhakti* or love of God. When you love God, you ask for nothing more. In love of God is the fulfilment of life, the perfection of all powers, the realisation of self.

*Karma, gnana* and *bhakti* have been, by many, separated one from the other. But don't we need all the three? The Gita, as I have said, is a scripture of synthesis. And these three, it seems to me, are but three steps in the One Way which may well be



called *mukti-marga*,—the 'Way of Liberation'. The final message of Krishna is:—"Giving up all *dharma*s (rituals and writ duties), come unto Me for refuge. I shall free thee from all sins. Grieve not!"

In this teaching is a note of hope. But this "giving up" of *dharma* comes through the practice of *dharma*. You cannot suddenly leap to the mountain-height : by stages must you ascend to the top. There are stages in the path of *atma-darshana*, self-realisation.

The path, the *marga*, is neither "eastern" nor "western." The path belongs to no one race, to no one religion. The triple path is known to mystics of East and West. It is referred to by the seers of the West as the triple path of purification, illumination and union. The Gita refers to it as the triple path of *karma*, *gnana*, and *bhakti*.

The path of *karma* or work is the path of purification. So Shankaracharya says :—"Work is for the purification of the mind." Work, selfless work, curbs what a Christian Saint calls "the impetuosity of passions." Right action, *punya karma*, prepares the seeker for truth, *gnana*, wisdom : for *punya karma* purifies the heart. *Punya karma* prepares the heart for self-realisation. And *punya karma* springs from desirelessness. Step by step, is the heart purified through the discipline of work and prepared to learn "to be still and know that I am God."

The path of which the Gita speaks has its roots in the Eastern psyche and the Western psyche : the path has its roots in the heart of universal humanity. The path is open to men and women of all races and all religions. The path is the path of Light, and the Light is within every self. Whoso hath sincerity and aspiration, courage and pure will, detachment and compassion, may tread the path. Receiving in silence, he will pour out in love upon those he meets. Such men, dying to themselves, will be a source of inspiration to communities and cities and nations. As a Sufi mystic saith :—"God does not deprive this world



of these fervent mystics : for they are its sustainers."

A question has been put to me as to the philosophy of the Gita. The Bhagavad Gita and Goethe's *Faust* are two of the greatest philosophic poems in literature. But let us not forget that philosophy grows out of experience. And experience is two-fold,—individual and vicarious, i. e., experience gained through one's own life and experience gained through the lives of others. In many things we learn from others, and so refrain from evil. The lives of the great, specially, will be found helpful. We appreciate and assimilate their experiences. If you would study the philosophy of the Gita, study carefully the life of Sri Krishna and the lives of the *bhaktas* of the Lord. Every life is a rich store-house of experience.

Through experience, also, we learn gradually to understand that the root-cause of our suffering is desire or *trishna*. Conquer craving,—is the call of the Gita. Be desireless,—is the message of Sri Krishna. *Trishna* is bondage. There is no freedom until the wandering ceases,—the wandering of thoughts and the wandering of desires.

*Mukti*,—is the great word of Hindu scriptures, as liberty is the great word of the modern world. But there is no true liberty until the tyranny of desires is broken. Travelling in the West, visiting Germany, England, and other countries, and seeing there the misery of the poor, the growth of greed and passion, I asked myself :—"Where is liberty?" There is no freedom where there is the reign of desires.

Experience is the beginning of philosophy. Freedom is the goal of philosophy.

One stage in the evolution of freedom is,—awakening. It is named "*atmabodhi*." Most of us are in a state of somnambulism. It is true, we do a number of things : but we do them, driven by lower desires. We act as does the somnambulist who walks in sleep. And so we stumble and fall in the pit of sin. We are not awake. The philosophy of the Gita calls



us to waking-consciousness.

Know thyself,—is the call of philosophy. It was the call of Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. It was the call of Socrates to his people. It is the call of sages in every age. Man has lost himself in the tumult of *maya*. Man has forgotten himself. When he knows himself,—knows his destiny, re-discovers the Home whence he cometh, he will no longer wander distractedly in the darkness of desires.

Sri Krishna says to Arjuna :—

“O mighty-armed ! as the ocean remains calm and undisturbed, though the waters flow into it, so a self-controlled man remains unmoved when desires enter into him. Such a saint attains peace,—not he who craves the objects of sense !

“That man attains peace who, abandoning all desires, moves about without attachment and longing, without the sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine.’”

Sri Krishna, also, says in the Gita ;— “Subduing self by the Self (*Atman*) destroy the enemy in the form of desire. difficult to evercome !”

So we read in the teaching of the Buddha :—

Let a man leave anger !  
 Let him forsake pride !  
 Let him overcome all bondage !  
 No suffering befalls the man  
 Who is not attached to name and fame,  
 And who calls nothing his own !

This “knowledge” is not possible without self-discipline, *sadhana*. “Follow her and serve her,” said Socrates about philosophy. And to follow her, it is necessary to submit to a process of self-discipline. Without purification of the inner bodies,—the *koshas*,—none may hope to know the supreme message of the Gita regarding the Atman (the Self) and the Universe. Not without reason has it been



told us in the Gita that the teaching of Sri Krishna must not be told to the man who is wanting in *bhakti* and *tapasya*.

Simplicity is an aspect of *tapasya*. And to grow in the Vision Philosophic of the Gita, it is necessary to cultivate simplicity,—simplicity in dress and diet, simplicity, too, in speech. One must not speak in anger or hate. Above all, let us not forget that simplicity is an inner energy. For true simplicity is not possible without humility of the heart. Thoreau rightly said that philosophy was a "life of simplicity."

The Gita puts emphasis on the Atman. You cannot cram philosophy out of books. Philosophy, in the Hindu books, is a *darshana*, a vision. And this grows out of life. Schopenhauer used a significant expression :—"Wisdom of life." The "Wisdom" comes to him who sees the folly of fame and *bhoga* and accumulation. So saw Maitreyi,—the wife of Yagnavalkya,—when she said to him :—"My dear husband! I want not wealth, for it will not bring me immortality. Teach me the way to Life Immortal." Then did Yagnavalkya,—a Rishi,—expound to her, his wife, the doctrine of the Self, telling her that the way of attainment was the way of the Atman.

True philosophy is communion with the Atman,—the Creative Life,—the Infinite that flows into and fertilises the finite, the Eternal that makes the historic process of time rich in meaning. The Gita speaks of the Infinite, the Creative Life. Not without reason has the Gita been called the *Ananta Gita*,—the Song of the Infinite. It is a song of freedom, a song of inner liberation. And out of the inner are the issues of outer life.

To Arjuna's questions, "Is life worth living?" "Has the world a value?" "Has manifestation a meaning?" Krishna's answer is significant. Do not condemn the world! Manifestation *has* a meaning. There is a Life of the Spirit, the Eternal Life. It is the only Life that really matters. But it enters into association with



the life "empirical." Much of this life, as lived by many, has little meaning. It is pursuit of the petty, the passing. It is machine-like. Let it obey the Spirit, be an instrument of the Atman, and it will glow with a divine meaning.

The problem of life is the problem of Ascent. How to rise from the empirical to the Divine? Through observation we gather experiences : technics and science tell of matter's pressure,—the pressure of *prakriti*. Through introspection we grow in conceptual thinking. A cloud comes, the cloud of *ahankara*, the cloud of darkness, *tamas*. Out of it we walk the way to Light. *Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya!* The way to Light, says the Gita, is the way of detachment, dispassion. It is true *sanyasa*. Says the Gita :—"He who acts, and thinks not of fruits of action, he is a *sanyasin*, a yogi." Action is inevitable : for "from Brahman action groweth." But action must be performed in cooperation with *Ishwara*, with the Divine Will. "Act in harmony with Me," says Sri Krishna.

Detachment, dispassion, is essential to spiritual action. Abandon *moha*, says Krishna to Arjuna. Which means :—Transcend "forms" or "appearances." The only real life is the Life of the Spirit. The "empirical" has its value only in the measure in which it reflects the Atmic life.

The Atmic life, the Life of the Spirit, is the life of depth. In the Deep dwells the Atman. The Gnostics spoke of the Spirit as "Indweller of Light." Break with forms to reach the depths of new life. The "detached" are the "poor in spirit." They renounce all desire for fruits of action. They "forsake" themselves,—the "ego" of desires, the world-*maya*.

The Atmic life, then, is the dedicated life. In the ancient story we read of an old blacksmith praying every day to the "God of the forge." That old blacksmith dedicated his work to the Invisible, the Immaterial. In this dedication is the secret of spiritualising society. The "forms" do not carry far. Regenera-



tion, spiritualisation, is needed. And "spiritualisation" is "dedication" to the Spirit.

"Life has no meaning," wrote a young man, "and, therefore, I kill myself." Full of meaning is life, to him who, renouncing the fruit of action, dedicates his work to the Spirit. Such a man was Damien. In answer to the appeal, "Is there any one ready to go to serve the lepers?" Damien left his homeland and friends for a far-off place, lived among the lepers, served them day and night,—until he became himself a leper and died to the glory of his Master! Such a man, too, was the Moravian who became a slave, in order to serve the slaves in the West Indies, and gave them the great message of the saving love of God.

Urgent is the world's need of this culture of the Dedicated Life. The Bhagavad Gita is the great text book of this spiritual culture,—greater to my mind, than Goethe's *Faust*, the greatest classic of the last century.

" Whatever thou givest,  
Whatever thou eatest,  
Whatever thou doest,  
Do it, O Arjuna, unto Me !"

says the Master in the Gita. To a dedicated life will the Gita,—the Song of the Lord,—sing its message in the conflicts and contradictions of daily life. To a dedicated life will the Lord come and reveal Himself.

"Find thy refuge in Me alone," says Krishna. "Follow thou Me!" said Christ. Krishna came to the Kurukshetra and, until His great revelation, Arjuna knew Him not. And Christ came by the lake-side to men who knew Him not. In their own experience and in fellowship with Krishna will they who dedicate their lives in His service know the Song of the Lord and glimpse His mystery on the Kurukshetra,—the holy field,—of life!

T. L. VASWANI



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This ancient Aryan Poem has ravished the minds and hearts of men and women in many lands and many ages. It is named "Srimad Bhagavad Gita." The words mean "The Lord's Song" or "The song Divine." The Song was uttered by Sri Krishna on the field of battle, named the Kurukshetra.

The Gita is a section of another big book,—India's ancient Epic, the *Mahabharata*. In the *Mahabharata* is given a detailed account of the battle between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The *Mahabharata* is an epic : its author was Vyasa, a Rishi. The Gita is a portion of that section of the *Mahabharata* which is named *Bhishma Parva*.

The Gita is regarded as an Upanishad, and is often spoken of as "Gitopanishad." It is referred to as the "milk of the *shastras*." The Gita is the "milk," the "essence" of scriptures. The essential teaching of Hindu scriptures is given us in this book, the Bhagavad Gita.

Duryodhana is a Kaurava prince, a son of King Dhritarashtra. Duryodhana wants power, authority, kingdom : he wants to see the Pandavas deprived of their territory. They have received half the kingdom. Yudhishtira is the eldest among the five Pandava brothers, the other four being Arjuna, Bhima, Nakula, Sahadeva. Arjuna, though not the eldest, is the chief of the Pandava brothers. Arjuna is the hero of the War. And Arjuna is the spiritual friend of Krishna.

Yudhishtira's kingdom is in Khandava prastha, near



Delhi. Maya builds Yudhishtira a magnificent Assembly Hall : Narada visits Yudhishtira and asks him to perform the *Raja suya yagna*, the "Sacrifice of the State." Yudhishtira has been acknowledged by several *rajahs* as their Chief : and to him come many of the kings and princes to participate in the "Sacrifice." Krishna comes and presides at the Ceremony. Vyasa visits Yudhishtira and warns him of impending disaster. Yudhishtira vows to live for others.

Duryodhana, too, is present at the "Sacrifice." Duryodhana is unable to bear the greatness of Yudhishtira. The Pandavas have received half the kingdom : Duryodhana is anxious to see them deprived of their territory. He remembers the counsel of Kaniṣa (Dhritarashtra's minister) to destroy the Pandavas by craft. Duryodhana and Sakuni are envious of the Pandavas prosperity and they plot to cheat Yudhishtira of his wealth in a game with dice. Sakuni plays in behalf of Duryodhana and wins by foul trick : Yudhishtira stakes in succession, his wealth, his Kingdom, his brothers, himself, and finally, Draupadi, and loses them all.

Draupadi, the daughter of king Draupada now married in the Pandava family, questions the legality of the claim upon her and appeals to Raja Dhritarashtra but gets no redress. She is dishonourably treated by Dushasana and Duryodhana. Bhima is wild with anger and vows terrible vengeance. Dhritarashtra is alarmed and restores the Pandavas their liberty. Yudhishtira is enticed to a second game of dice : he loses again, his all and he submits to the following settlement :—(1) the five Pandava brothers and Draupadi must wander for twelve years, in exile, and in the thirteenth year should remain in strict concealment; (2) for these thirteen years, the entire kingdom is to be administered by Duryodhana; and (3) if the Pandavas keep to the agreement, they will have their portion of the kingdom back, after thirteen years.



Dhritarashtra has forebodings of the coming doom. The Pandavas set out for the forest. Krishna visits the Pandavas. Vyasa, too, meets them. Arjuna goes on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas. Narada, too, visits the Pandavas. Duryodhana and his associates are taken prisoners by Gandharvas and only rescued by the Pandavas. Jayadarma tries to carry off Draupadi, but is defeated and captured : he is released after humiliation. The Pandavas, in various disguises, obtain employment at the court of Raja Virata. Kichaka, brother-in-law of the king, tries to seduce Draupadi. Bhima kills Kichaka.

The Pandavas have kept the word : and after thirteen years claim their kingdom back : but Duryodhana point-blank refuses to return their State to them.

Raja Draupada sends revered *purohita* (preceptors) to bring round Duryodhana. He listens to none.

Sri Krishna Himself intervenes and appeals to the Raja, assembled in Dhritarashtra's palace, for peace with the Pandavas. Sri Krishna even pleads:—"If you, O king, will not give the Pandavas half the kingdom, which is theirs by right and by agreement, give them any five villages you like." But Duryodhana is adamant as steel, and says :—"I will not give them so much even as the space of a single needle." Duryodhana disregards the advice given him by Bhishma and Drona. Duryodhana plots to seize Krishna. Therefore, Krishna uses his *yogic shakti* and escapes. Krishna, returning to the Pandavas, gives a report of His mission and Duryodhana's obduracy. Krishna returns to Dwarka. The Kauravas and the Pandavas now prepare for War.

Duryodhana goes to Dwarka, for Krishna is there, the King of Dwarka, to ask for his help in the coming struggle. Arjuna, too, reaches Dwarka the same day. Both find that Sri Krishna is asleep. Duryodhana sits down on a costly carpet in Krishna's room. Arjuna, with folded hands, stands in humility at Krishna's feet and in front of him. On waking up,



Krishna sees Arjuna before him and, then, on turning His head, sees Duryodhana in the same room, sitting on a costly carpet. Krishna greets both and asks them what has brought them to Him.

Duryodhana says :—"You have love for us both : and we both are Your friends. But of the two, I came to You first : and a good man gives help to him who cometh first. I have the first claim, therefore, on You!"

Sri Krishna says :—"Yes, Duryodhana, you came first : but I saw Arjuna first. Therefore, I would help you both. But the *shastras* declare that the wishes of the young ones should be respected first : so let Arjuna's wish be first fulfilled. My help can be of two kinds. One help will be that of My army, the Narayana Sena. The other help will be My own self, and I shall not fight, and I shall use no weapons of war. Arjuna! ask what help you will. Do you want My army or do you want Myself?"

Arjuna says :—"Master! I want You!"

Then Duryodhana says quickly :—"Krishna! I want Your army."

And Krishna says :—"Have My army : lead it to the battlefield. It will fight on the Kaurava side!"

So we read in the Old Testament :—"Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will put trust in the Lord, our God!"

When Duryodhana returns to Hastinapur, happy with Krishna's army, Krishna asks Arjuna :—"You know I shall not fight : why did you accept Me, and not choose My army?" Arjuna said :—"Master! You alone can achieve all : then why should I choose Your army? And there has been a longing in my heart that You may drive my chariot : and in the coming battle, I look up to You, Master, to fulfil this longing!"

Krishna, the Compassionate One, accepts the task of driving the chariot. Krishna becomes Arjuna's *sarathi* on the battlefield and at the commencement



of the battle, gives the divine Teaching of the Gita. Dhritarashtra is the father of Duryodhana and other Kauravas, and the uncle of the Pandavas. He is the king of Hastinapur, now named Delhi.

The word "Dhritarashtra" = Dhrita + rashtra. Dhrita = held; rashtra = state, kingdom. The word, "Dhitarashtra" means, "he who holds the state or kingdom." Dhritarashtra was legally disqualified by his blindness : he had seized the throne. He did injustice to the Pandavas. He denied them their share in the kingdom. He had *moha* for his sons, the Kauravas. He was under the influence of Duryodhana. Duryodhana wished to be the Lord of the entire kingdom. Plato, a Rishi of ancient Greece, says that justice is the basis of the state. Today, alas! many, like Dhritarashtra, like Duryodhana, think not of "justice" but of "power." The heresy of today is, "the state is power." The ancient truth, alas! has been forgotten that a kingdom which slays justice and glorifies power is built on sand and must crumble to its fall. The Gita's emphasis is on *Dharma*. Build the state in *dharma*. *Dharma* is true *shakti*. Develop *shakti* : renounce *adharma*, injustice.

But Dhritarashtra does not see this truth. Dhritarashtra has not the eyes to see the truth. Dhritarashtra, we read, is physically blind : he is, also, morally blind. Rishi Vyasa tells him, as the battle is about to begin, "I can heal you and infuse light in your eyes that you may see!" But Raja Dhritarashtra does not wish to see. He says :—"On this battlefield will my relatives kill one another : I would not see this sad spectacle. Let me be blind. But I do wish to have a full report of the War from the lips of some one who may see clearly what takes place on the battlefield."

Then the sage, Vyasa, blesses Sanjaya, Dhritarashtra's charioteer, with the gift of clear vision, and Sanjaya is able to see clearly what takes place on the battlefield. And the Rishi says to Dhritarashtra :—"Sanjaya



will tell you all about the battle. He will see it all with clear eyes. In front of him or behind him, by day or by night, nothing that will happen will be concealed from him. And no weapon will harm his body, and no fatigue will fall on him. What destiny has decreed, will come to pass. This War will be destruction and none can arrest it. Yet in the end, *dharma* will triumph."

Saying this, Rishi Vyasa takes leave to go. And Sanjaya gives Dhritarashtra a description of the countries from which the two armies have gathered. Sanjaya gives, too, a geographical account of Jambudvipa (India), its seven regions and six dividing mountain ranges, etc. Sanjaya talks of seven *dvipas*, and of the Sun, Moon and Rahu.

Then the War begins. For ten days the struggle is fierce. Then Bhishma, the leader of the Kaurava army, is struck with arrows and falls down from his chariot. Sanjaya announces to Dhritarashtra the fall of Bhishma. The king is filled with grief and asks Sanjaya to relate to him, in detail, the story of the War. Then Sanjaya presents his detailed report of the events. Sanjaya describes the arrangement of the two armies. Arjuna invokes Durga in a hymn of praise. Durga appears and promises victory. Dhritarashtra asks Sanjaya to say what the Kauravas and the Pandavas did on the battlefield. "In the holy field of Kurukshetra, what did they do, O Sanjaya, my sons and the Pandavas, gathered together, eager for battle?" With this question begins, then, the first *adhyaya* (chapter) of the Gita.



## CHAPTER I

### THE LONELINESS OF ARJUNA

Here the Blessed Lord's Song is Begun

*Dhritarashtra said :—*

1. On the holy plain (*dharmakshetra*), the field of righteousness, the field of the Kurus, gathered together, eager for battle, what did they, O Sanjaya, my people and the sons of Pandu (Pandavas) do?

*Dharmakshetra* : Kurukshetra is named *dharmakshetra*. Kurukshetra is near Hastinapur, to the north of modern Delhi. There, we read, the very gods did *tapasya*.

The opening word of the Gita is *dharma*. It was the great word of ancient India. The word of ancient Greece was "beauty," that of Rome was "power." But the message of India's Rishis was :—"Build your life in *dharmā*!"

*Dharma* is from the word "*dhru*," which means "hold." *Dharma* is the power which "holds" life. *Dharma* is not in outer rites and ceremonies. *Dharma* is *jivan-shakti*, the power that holds life.

And "*kshetra*" means "field." Let every one ask himself :—"What am I sowing in the field of life,—*dharma* or *adharma*?" To him who sows the seed of *dharma*, life becomes a song, a Gita, a music of the Lord.

"*Eager for battle.*" Yes,—the Kauravas were eager for battle : the Pandavas desired peace. "Blessed are the peace makers," said Jesus. Sri Krishna tried his best to see that there was peace between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. But Duryodhana rejected peace-offers. The Pandavas fought in self-defence. Their army was comparatively small : but the small Pandava army won!

It is the big Kaurava army that lost,—not for the first time in history. At the Pass of Thermopylae, a small but heroic band



of Greeks resisted a hundred thousand soldiers of the king of Iran. There is a Power that works in history, that builds history,—a Power that breaks the violence of kings, a spiritual Power that proclaims:— "*Dharma*,—not the tyrant's pride!"

*Sanjaya* : the charioteer of the blind king, Dhritarashtra.

*My people*. This sense of mineness, this feeling of *ahan-kara*, is the source of the world's tragedy.

*Sanjaya said* :—

2. Then Prince Duryodhana, having seen arrayed the army of the Pandavas, approached his teacher and spake this word :

*Prince Duryodhana* : he is practically the raja ; he carries on the entire administration in the name of his father,—the blind king, Dhritarashtra.

*Teacher* : The teacher referred to is Drona Acharya, a skilled teacher in archery. He taught the art of war to Kauravas and Pandavas. His position in the Kaurava army is next to that of Bhishma,—the Chief Commander. Drona is loyal to the Kaurava king. Drona fought to the last, until he lost his life.

3. "Behold, O Teacher, this mighty host of the sons of Pandu, arrayed for battle by thy wise pupil, the son of Drupada.

*Wise pupil*. The wise pupil is Dhrishtadyumna. He is the son of Raja Drupada, king of Panchala, and is the Chief Commander of the Pandava army. He is a brother-in-law of the Pandavas.

Drona killed Raja Drupada on the battlefield. And the Raja's son, Dhrishtadyumna, killed Drona. And Drona's son, Ashvathama, killed Dhrishtadyumna. The wheel of *karma*

4. Here are heroes, benders of bows, to Bhima and Arjuna equal in battle,—Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada, the great car-warrior.

5. Dhrishtaketu, Chekitana and the valiant King of Kashi and Purujit and Kuntibhoja and Shaibya, bull among men.

6. And mighty Yudhamanyu and Uttamauja, the



brave; Saubhadra and the sons of Draupadi, mighty car-drivers.

*Bhima* : the second of the five Pandavas. He was the Hindu Hercules. He was a picture of heroic strength. The very looks of Bhima frightened many of his enemies.

*Arjuna* : the Pandava Hero; the third of the five Pandavas, a disciple and a friend of Sri Krishna. To Arjuna, on the battlefield, Sri Krishna gives the Teaching of the Gita.

*Yuyudhana* : his other name was Satyaki. He was a mighty warrior.

*Virata* : King of Matsya-desh. A righteous king who took care of his subjects with loving devotion. In his court, the Pandavas stayed in disguise for twelve months, during the period of their exile. Raja Virata's daughter, Uttara, was married to Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu.

*Dhrishtaketu* : a son of Sishupala, king of Chedi-desh.

*Chekيتana* : a great warrior; commander of one of the seven divisions of the Pandava army.

*Purujit and Kuntibhoja* : brothers of Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas.

*Shaibya* : King of the Sibi tribe. Duryodhana calls him *narapungava*, i. e., "bull amongst men." The bull was a symbol of strength. Shaibya was a man of strength and valour, a hero among men.

*Yudhamanyu and Uttamauja* : both were brothers, princes of Panchala, brave and strong. Both were killed, when asleep at night, by Ashvathama.

*Saubhadra* : son of Subhadra (Sri Krishna's sister) and Arjuna. Abhimanyu was his name. He displayed uncommon heroism on the battlefield.

*Sons of Draupadi* : they were five,—Prativindhya, Srutasoma, Srutakirtti, Satanika, Srutukarman.

All these, eighteen in number, were great warriors. The Aryan race was vital. If all these heroes,—and those who fought on the Kaurava side,—had spent their strength in the service of peace, they would have built up a new Bharata. But dark are the ways of destiny. India was broken on the battlefield of Kurukshetra : there was the *kshatrya* race broken. And, again and again, has the stranger come to strangle India. And, again and again, has India suffered from the stripes of subjection.

7. Know, also, O noblest of the twice-born, the leaders of my army, the chief warriors on our side. I will name them now for thy sake.



*Noblest of the twice-born* : this refers to Drona, who was a Brahmin-warrior. The Brahmin is regarded as the "twice-born." Here is hinted the truth that man, born into the world of Nature, must grow up into the world of Spirit, must have a second birth and become a child of Light.

8. Thyself Drona, and Bhishma and Karna and Kripa, ever victorious in battle; and Ashvathama, Vikarna, and also the son of Somadatta.

9. And many other heroes, for my sake, renouncing their lives, armed with many kinds of weapons and all well-skilled in war.

*Bhishma* : the old sage warrior, the Commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army. He brought up Dhritarashtra as, also, the Pandava Princes. He loves the Pandavas but will not desert the Kauravas, for he has eaten of their salt. He was a *bhakta* of Sri Krishna and, in the presence of Duryodhana, took the vow that he would never kill the five Pandava Princes. For ten days, he waged a terrible war.

*Karna* : Arjuna's step-brother and a great friend of Duryodhana who made him king of Anga (Bengal). After Drona was killed, Karna became the Commander-in-chief of the Kauravas for two days only, when Arjuna killed him on the battlefield. He had a heart full of charity and kindness.

*Kripa* : brother-in-law of Drona; one of the three Kauravas who survived the slaughter of the Mahabharata War.

*Ashvathama* : Drona's son and one of the generals of the Kaurava army.

*Vikarna* : Duryodhana's brother, the third son of Dhritrashtra.

*Son of Somadatta* : Somadatta was the king of the Bahikas.

10. Unlimited is this army of ours, guarded by Bhishma, while that army of theirs (Pandavas) is easy of count, guarded by Bhima.

*Unlimited* : the word for "unlimited" in Sanskrit is *aparyaptam*. The word, according to Shridhara Swami, means "insufficient." And the *sloka*, then, would read as under : — "Insufficient seems this army of ours, though guarded by Bhishma, while that army of theirs seems sufficient, though guarded by Bhima." According to this interpretation, Duryodhana speaks in fear, lest the Kaurava army be defeated.

Actually, the Kaurava army was greater than the Pandava



army by four divisions.

11. Therefore in the rank and file let all, standing firmly in their respective divisions, guard Bhishma.

12. To cheer up Duryodhana, the aged Kuru, his valiant grandsire (Bhishma), blew his conch, ringing a blast of lion-roar.

13. Then conches and kettle-drums, tabors and drums and horns straightway struck up; and wild was the sound that rose.

14. Then, seated in their great war chariot, yoked to white steeds, Krishna and Arjuna blow each his divine conch.

15. Krishna blew his conch named *Panchajanya*; Arjuna blew his conch called Devadatta; while Bhima, the terrible, blew his mighty conch named Paundra.

16. King Yudhishtira, son of Kunti, blew his conch Anantavijaya; Nakula and Sahadeva blew still upon their conches, Sughosha and Manipushpaka.

*King Yudhishtira* : the oldest of the five Pandava Princes, a man of calm, passionless judgment, strict veracity, rectitude and justice. He was renowned more as a ruler than as a warrior. His conch is named Anantavijaya, which means "whose victory is endless," "victory's voice."

*Nakula* : the fourth of the Pandava Princes, an excellent horse-driver. His conch was Sanghosha, which means, "sweet-sounding."

*Sahadeva* : the youngest of the five Pandava Princes. His conch is named Manipushpaka, which means "jewel-blossom," "gem-flowered." It was a beautiful conch, like a jewel in appearance and it was gem-bedecked.

17. And the King of Kashi, the Chief of archers, and Shikhandi, the mighty car-warrior, and Dhristadyumna and Virata and Satyaki, the unconquered.

18. And Drupada and the sons of Draupadi, O Lord of Earth, and Saubhadra, the mighty-armed, on all sides several conches blew.



*Shikhandi* : son of Drupada : his arrow struck Bhishma on the battlefield and Bhishma was fatally wounded.

*Satyaki* : Krishna's charioteer.

19. That tumultuous uproar rent the hearts of Dhritarashtra's sons, filling the earth and sky with sound.

20. Then Arjuna, whose banner (in his war-chariot) bore the crest of Hanuman, looked at the sons of Dhritarashtra, drawn up in battle order; and as the flight of missiles was about to begin, he took up his bow.

21. And spake this word to Krishna :

*Arjuna said :—*

22. I would behold those men standing, eager for battle, with whom I must strive in this strife of war.

23. I wish to look at those who are gathered together here, ready to fight and eager to achieve in battle what is dear to the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra.

*Sanjaya said :—*

24. Thus addressed by Arjuna, Krishna drew up that best of chariots, O Bharata (Dhritarashtra), between the two armies,

25. In front of Bhishma, Drona and all the chiefs.

*Krishna said :—*

Behold, O Arjuna, these Kurus assembled (here).

26. Then saw Arjuna standing there uncles and grandfathers, teachers, mother's, brothers, sons and grandsons, cousins and comrades.

27. Father-in-law and friends in both the armies. Seeing all these kinsmen, thus standing arrayed, Arjuna.

28. Was deeply moved to pity and uttered this in



sadness.

*Arjuna said :—*

Seeing these, my kinsmen, O Krishna, arrayed and eager for fight,

29. My limbs fail and my mouth is parched, my body quivers and my hair stands on end.

30. The Gandiva bow slips from my hand and my skin burns all over; I am not able to stand steady; my brain is reeling.

31. And I can see evil omens, O Krishna ! Nor do I foresee any good from slaying kinsmen in battle.

32. For I desire not victory, O Krishna, nor kingdom, nor pleasures. What is kingdom to us, O Krishna, or enjoyment or even life itself?

33. Those for whose sake we desire kingdom, enjoyments and pleasures, they stand here in battle, renouncing life and riches,—

34. Teachers, fathers, sons and grandfathers, uncles and fathers-in-law, grandsons and brothers-in-law, other kinsmen,—

35. These I would not kill, though killed myself, O Krishna, even for the kingship of the three worlds; how much less for the sake of the earth?

36. Slaying these sons of Dhritarashtra, what pleasure can be ours, O Krishna? Killing these criminals, only sin will take hold of us.

37. So it is not right that we slay our relatives, the sons of Dhritarashtra. Indeed, how can we be happy, O Krishna, if we kill our kinsmen?

Arjuna is a great hero, but is confounded in the presence of a grave situation. Arjuna came to Kurukshetra prepared to fight : but Arjuna is puzzled, seeing his kinsmen standing arrayed.

Arjuna feels lonely. Everything seems to be slipping away



from him. Arjuna is sad at heart. His mind is agitated. A "cloud of forgetfulness" crosses his consciousness. Why does he,—a hero of many a fight,—suddenly suffer from nervous fright?

This has happened, again and again. In the hour of mental agony, we are often tempted to renounce. Arjuna is moved to pity, seeing his kinsmen. And does not pity often open the door to weakness? Can I slay my kinsmen, Arjuna asks, and be happy? He is sad, unspeakably sad. Out of the heart are the issues of life. Arjuna's heart is moved to pity: and then his mind is confused. What is my duty? he asks.

Arjuna sees arrayed on the field his teacher (*vidya-guru*), Drona, at whose feet he had learnt archery. Arjuna sees yet another, greater even than Drona,—the *brahmachari*, the sage, Bhishma. How can Arjuna slay them, his teachers and kinsmen, "fathers and sons, grandfathers, mother's brothers, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives"? "I desire not victory," says Arjuna, "nor kingdom, nor the kingship of the three worlds, nor even life!"

Is not Arjuna being guided by social conventions and customary morality? Must not all symbols of external morality be slain, in order to develop the intuition, the inner intuition of the Spirit? Arjuna has yet to realise that to live is to renounce. He who renounces not cannot expect to grow in the life of the Spirit. Is there not the wisdom of higher life in the words of Sri Isa (Jesus):—"If any man cometh unto Me but is not prepared to renounce his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, he cannot be My disciple?"

Did not Prahlada renounce his own father to serve the Lord? Did not Shankara renounce his all before he could go out on his mission to India? Did not Chaitanya renounce his own wife before he could be a saviour of Bengal?

Let it not be said that Sri Krishna condemns compassion. Mercy is a *sattvic* quality. But the Gita points out that true mercy is not *moha* (attachment). True mercy is an aspect of love: and you do not rise to love, until you have entered into the light of knowledge and fulfilled the law of *dharma*. Arjuna is in darkness and has forgotten, for the time being, to do his *dharma*.

Arjuna has yet to realise that our real relations and kinsmen, our friends and elders are not always those who have physical ties of kinship with us. Our real kinsmen and friends are they who are lovers of God, not they who, born in our family, break the law of God.

Arjuna has a wrong conception of *dharma*. Our *dharma* or



duty is to do the will of God without thinking of results. True *dharma* is higher than mercy prompted by attachment or ignorance. Sri Rama showed, in his life, how true mercy may be blended with true *dharma*. "I give shelter unto all!" said Sri Rama. Yet, in obedience to *dharma*, he fought Ravana. Sri Krishna endeavours to teach Arjuna what is true *dharma*, so that Arjuna may be freed from *shoka* and *moha*, grief and attachment.

An important teaching of the Gita is :—"Slay the senses!" An ancient scripture of wisdom declares :—"Let the disciple learn to slay!" The true disciple must learn to fight. "Fight ceaselessly with the evil," says Zoroaster, "in cooperation with Ahura Mazda!" "We are here to vanquish," says Carlyle. Buddha had to fight Mara : Jesus had to fight Satan. Arjuna forgets he must fight Duryodhana.

38. Even if these, with minds overpowered by greed, see no wrong in the destruction of the family and no crime in treachery to friends;

39. Why should not we have the wisdom to turn away from such a sin, O Krishna,—we who see the wrong in the destruction of the family?

Arjuna's argument is that only that duty should be done which brings about a desirable fruit. How mistaken is Arjuna! Duty should be done whatever the fruit,—desirable or undesirable. Duty should be done as an offering to the Eternal.

Arjuna points out that responsibility is proportionate to knowledge. We Pandavas know what an evil it is to destroy a family. Our responsibility, therefore, is all the greater, if we slay our kinsmen.

40. In the destruction of a family is ancient loss: the immemorial family traditions (*kula dharma*) persist; and when these laws, traditions, perish, lawlessness overcomes the whole family.

41. And when lawlessness (*adharma*) prevails, O Krishna, the women of the family become corrupt; women corrupted, O Krishna, there ariseth confusion of castes.

Arjuna speaks of confusion of castes (*varna sankara*). The word *varna* means (1) colour; (2) race; and (3)



caste. When different cultures and civilisations intermingle, the results are hardly satisfactory. Not without reason were inter-marriages prohibited in Rome by law.

It may be noted in passing that the system of caste, as we see it in India today, does not correspond to the Gita ideal.

The Hindu Race is inspired by a noble ideal of womanhood. Woman, according to the teaching of the great ones of the Hindu Race, is a preserver of life and the guardian of the aesthetic and spiritual ideals of humanity. In the *Bhagavata*, we read how the individual and the race owe everything to the purity and goodness and refinement of the women of the race. Two thoughts are emphasised in the teaching of Hindu Rishis and Law-givers :—(1) reverence for womanhood; (2) obedience on the part of women to *dharma*.

42. And this confusion draggeth to hell both the family and those who have destroyed it. For the spirits of their ancestors fall, deprived of their offerings of rice-balls and water.

Arjuna refers here to the belief that departed ancestors require offerings of rice and water for their welfare. Concerning the *shraddha* ceremony, the great oriental scholar, Max Muller, wrote the following :—"I deeply sympathise with the Hindu *shraddha* ceremony. May I wish we have something like it in our own religion? To keep alive the memory of our parents, to feel their presence during the great trials of our life, to be influenced by what we know they would have wished us to do, and to try to honour their name by showing ourselves not unworthy bearers of it,—that is the *shraddha* ceremony in which we can all partake, nay ought to partake, whatever our religion may be. There is a real, though unseen, bond of union (*tantu*) that connects us, through our parents and ancestors, with the Great Author of all things, and the same bond will connect ourselves, through our children, with the utmost distant generations. If we know that we are constantly reminded of it by ceremonies, like that of your *shraddha*, we are not likely to forget the responsibility that rests on every one of us. In that sense, your *shraddha* is a blessing on your parents because of yourselves; and whatever the future of your religion may be in India, I hope this communion with the spirits of your ancestors or *pitris* will always form an essential part of it."

43. By the misdeeds of those who destroy family and create confusion of *varnas*, the immemorial laws



of the race and the family are destroyed.

44. And we have heard it said, O Krishna, that the men of the families whose ancient traditions are lost needs must live in hell.

45. Alas! what a great sin have we resolved to commit in striving to kill our kindred through our greed for the pleasures of kingship.

46. If the sons of Dhritarashtra, weapons in hand, should slay me, while I remain unresisting and unarmed, that would for me be better.

*Sanjaya said :—*

47. Having spoken thus, on the battlefield, Arjuna sank down on his chariot-seat, casting away his bow and arrow, his mind overwhelmed by grief.

Arjuna is sincere but his mind is under a cloud and he,—a prince among Aryavarta's knights,—talks of *vairagya* (renunciation)! Arjuna's words are uttered in agony,—and *moha* (attachment). What a difference between *moha* and love! Love is impersonal : *moha* is of the "outer" form. Love is a descent of the Eternal : *moha* or attachment clips the very wings of aspiration and love.

Seeing the armies arrayed on the Kurukshetra, Arjuna says to Sri Krishna :—"How can I fight those I love?" And Krishna has to explain that Arjuna does not really love but has *moha* for his friends and relatives.

Arjuna is deeply impressed with the physical pain and material discomfort involved in war. Arjuna has yet to know that the end of life is not the pursuit of material happiness. How true is the teaching of Yagnavalkya in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* that "wives and children, teachers and kinsmen, are dear not for their own sake but for the sake of the *Atman*." Arjuna's acts have their root in desire, not in *dharma*. Arjuna has yet to learn the lesson of *nishkama karma* i., e., desireless action.

Fortunately, Krishna is Arjuna's charioteer (*parthasarathi*). Krishna holds the reins. God and man are both in the fight against evil. Fortunately, God holds the reins. Krishna understands that Arjuna has not true *vairagya*. Arjuna's *vairagya* is *moha*, is weakness. So when Arjuna says, "I will not fight," and sinks into silence, the Master smiles. Then Krishna



speaks his words of wisdom unto Arjuna. "Weep not," the Master says to His beloved disciple, "but be a man, a master-man! Abandon weakness, O Arjuna! Stand up in courage! Stand up and fight!"

Krishna asks Arjuna to plunge into action and fight heroically in a spirit of non-attachment,—free from the motive of egotism. The heroic note in the Gita needs to be emphasised, today. To the youths of India, I say:—Study the great heroes of the Bharata War. For we are passing through a period of disintegration. This ancient land of the Rishis lies broken and bleeding. The Gita teaches that weakness is a sin. *Shakti* is a spiritual virtue. Will-power must be developed; and will-power must be both strong and pure. Wake up thy will-power,—is the Gita's message to young India.

"Stand up!" says Krishna to Arjuna. Stand up and fight evil! The message of the Gita is one of courage. Life is a battlefield of values and your Temple, O children of the Rishis, is on the battlefield! March on! Nor beat retreat!

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, and Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this be the first chapter, entitled :

### *Arjuna Vishada Yoga*

Or the Yoga of the Depression of Arjuna.

The first chapter of the Gita is entitled "Vishada Yoga." *Vishada* means depression: *yoga* means section. *Vishada Yoga* is the beginning of the Gita. Indeed, the first step in spiritual life is *vishada*, is darkness of the soul. In the very first step we take in spiritual progress, we cry out in sorrow:—"What is the meaning of life? What does it all mean? Why are we here? Whither do we go?" And, perhaps, we cry as cried even the Great One:—"My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me? Did not Draupadi, too, experience this darkness of the soul, when she cried out:—"All have left me, my kinsmen, my brothers, my father.—even You. O Krishna!"

Everyone must pass through a period of loneliness before he enters into self-knowledge, awareness of himself. In loneliness does the seeker get behind his "ego": and in loneliness he realises that he is not alone. He realises that while he has travelled far from Home, Krishna is with him still. Arjuna's mind is solitary, but Krishna has begun to touch his heart. Above the clouds, above the darkness, shine His lotus-



feet. Arjuna enters into "darkness" in order that he may return to God purified and may know that He dwells in darkness to lead Arjuna on, step by step, until, in rapturous ecstasy, he exclaims:—

Thou art the Primal One!  
Thou art the Goal Supreme!  
Thou dost fill the world from end to end,  
O Thou of Infinite Form (*anantarupam*)!  
[XI. 38]



## CHAPTER II

### THE TEACHING BEGINS

*Sanjaya said :—*

1. To Arjuna thus with pity overcome, with eyes dimmed with tears, despondent, Krishna spoke these words :—

*The Blessed Lord said :—*

2. Whence hath come to thee this stain of spirit, in this hour of crisis? This dejection is not worthy of an Aryan. It shuts the door to heaven. Its end is disgrace, O Arjuna!

3. Yield not to unmanliness, O Arjuna! It doth not befit thee. Cast off this impotence of the heart. Arise, O Arjuna!

*Arjuna said :—*

4. How O Krishna, shall I attack Bhishma and Drona with arrows in battle? Are they not worthy of reverence, O Krishna?

5. Better to live in this world by begging than to slay these noble Gurus (teachers). Slaying them, I should but taste of delights besmeared with blood!

6. Nor do we know which for us be the better—that we conquer them or they conquer us. To slay the sons of Dhritarashtra, who stand in the enemy ranks, would be to extinguish for ever the saviour of life.



7. My *svabhava*, my very being, is stricken with the weakness of faintness and sentimental pity. And my mind is confused as to duty. So I ask Thee. Tell me, for certain, which is better. I am Thy disciple. I seek refuge in Thee. Teach me.

Arjuna's mind gropes in darkness. Arjuna cannot see clearly where his duty lies. So he asks Krishna to tell him frankly and clearly, "which is better."

*I am Thy disciple* : "I am your pupil, seeking light," says Arjuna. There are three stages. In the first, the *jignasu* is a seeker : in the second, he becomes a disciple or pupil : in the third, he becomes a child or son of the Guru. Then he is no longer confused.

*Teach me* : the words in Sanskrit are "shadhi mam," which also mean, "influence me." Here is a hint as to the Guru's method. Spirituality is more than some significant sayings : spirituality is a *shakti*. The Guru's method is one of evocation : he evokes energy, *shakti*, in the disciple. On our pilgrimage from atom to the Atman, we all need the helping hand of an elder brother,—a Guru.

8. This anguish withers up my senses. I see not how it would go, even if I were to obtain unrivalled dominion over all the earth or even the sovereignty of the Shining Ones (gods).

*Sanjaya said* :—

9. Having thus spoken to Krishna, Arjuna said to Him :—"I will not fight." And with these words Arjuna fell silent.

Arjuna becomes silent. Silence, too, is a teacher.

10. Then, to Arjuna, who remained sorrowing thus in the midst of the two armies, Krishna, smiling as it were, spake the following words.

Krishna smiles, for He knows that Arjuna's grief is *moha, maya*. Arjuna is in grief for lack of knowledge, understanding. Who is not my own? This must Arjuna know to rise above sorrow to understanding.

Krishna smiles, for he knows that death cannot kill what never dies : death is but crossing the earth, as man crosses the seas.



Arjuna has to pass through a period of spiritual desolation,—the “dark night,”—before the Light can come. Arjuna has to realise that tradition must not be destroyed but must protect justice, else would society and religion crumble to their fall.

To Arjuna speaks Krishna “smiling,” pointing out that Arjuna’s arguments are based upon external and superficial aspects of the *shastras*. “the letter of the law.” Arjuna’s fear and doubt are, Krishna points out, *un-shastric*, against the real teaching and spirit of the *shastras*. What is *dharma*? To Arjuna, *dharma* is ritual. To Krishna, *dharma* is the eternal divine Law which asks for conformity to the Will of God in the service of suffering creation, and, in that service, thinks not of fruits or results but leaves them to God.

*The Blessed Lord said :—*

11. Thou grieveest for those whom thou shouldst not grieve for, and yet thou speakest words which sound wise. But the wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.

Arjuna’s grief is due to ignorance. Arjuna lacks understanding as to what is life and what is death. Death is but *maya*, an appearance. The Self dieth not. The truly wise do not renounce their duty, though “appearances” be arrayed against them. They go on with the work allotted them. They mind not their mutinous circumstances. Like Columbus, in the midst of his mutinous sailors, wise ones say :—“Sail on and on and on and on !”

The second chapter is named, *Sankhya Yoga*. The *Sankhya* is not the *Sankhya* of Kapila. The *Sankhya* is the wisdom of the Upanishads. It is expounded in *slokas* 11–38.

12. Never was there a time when I was not, nor thou, nor these lords of men, nor verily shall we ever cease to be.

In all the shifting scenes of life, the *inner* soul never dies. What dies is the outer man, the body that, as an Eastern sage hath said, “plays its part on the boards of the world !”

The *shastras*, the scriptures, teach that the true man is the Atman, not the body. But Arjuna identifies “man” with the “body.” He thinks the joys and sorrows of the body are those of the true man : he confounds the unreal with the Real. The true man is the inner soul.

13. As the soul experienceth, in the body, child-



hood, youth and age, so passeth he on to another body. The *dheera*,—the sage,—is not perplexed by this.

The soul passes, from body to body, and is unaffected by outward things. The Self abides : the bodies are transient.

Why does the soul pass from body to body? To gather experiences and so to enrich life and abide in the Eternal.

The Atman is the Lord of the body. The three states,—childhood, youth and age,—are of the body. The continuity of the soul is emphasised. The diverse bodies of childhood, youth and age, do not cause a doubt in our minds about the identity of the Atman. So a new body after death should not create doubts in our minds about the soul's continuity.

14. Contacts with their objects, O Arjuna, give rise to cold and heat, pleasure and pain. They come and go, are impermanent. Endure them, Arjuna !

It is the body that is affected by the impressions of the sense-life : impermanent are they. The Atman is never touched. So Marcus Aurelius says :—"Things themselves touch not the soul. Let the part of thy soul which leads and governs be untouched by the movements of the flesh, whether of pleasure or of pain."

15. The man, who is serene, in pleasure and pain,—undisturbed by either,—he lives in the Life undying, O chief amongst the sons of men (Arjuna) !

16. The unreal hath no being : the Real never ceaseth to be. The truth about these two has been perceived by the seers of Truth.

The Atman, the Real, cannot be destroyed. Death is an experience not of the Atman, but of the body : the Atman is deathless. The body goes : the Atman subsists.

The body is *asat* : of it you cannot predicate being, be-ness, reality. *Asat* is destructible, phenomenal.

*Sat* is Reality. *Sat* is *akshara*, undying. *Asat* is becoming, not being. The stream of becoming moves from moment to moment, is flux, belongs to the realm of change.

One recalls the lines of Shelley :—

The One remains : the many change and pass :  
Heaven's Light forever shines : earth's shadows fly :  
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
Stains the white radiance of Eternity.



17. None hath the power to destroy the Imperishable One who pervadeth all that is. Know that to be indestructible.

"*Tad*" means in English "That." "*Tad*," "That," is the "Self,"—the Atman.

"That," "*Tad*," is Life. It pervadeth all. Life is spread through all : and Life cannot be destroyed. Only the "bodies," (*dehi*), the "fleeting frames," can be destroyed. "That," "*Tad*," is the Eternal. "*Tad*," "That," is indestructible (*avinashi*) and incomprehensible.

The unchanging That pervades all beings. A peace fills the heart as the realisation grows that forms may come and go, personalities may appear and disappear, but That can neither come nor go but *is* for ever.

18. These bodies of the embodied One, who is eternal, indestructible and incomprehensible, are said to be passing. Therefore fight, O Arjuna!

19. He who thinketh that this slays or he who thinketh this is slain,—both of them fail to perceive the truth. This one slayeth not, nor is he slain.

20. He never is born, nor does he, at any time, die. Nor, having once come to be, does he cease to be. He is unborn, perpetual, eternal, ancient. He is not slain when the body is slain.

The Atman, the Self, cannot slay and cannot be slain. One recalls Emerson's words in his well-known poem, *Brahma* :—

If the red slayer thinks he slays,

Or if the slain thinks he is slain,

They know not well the subtle ways :

I keep and pass and turn again.

"Ye are gods," said Jesus to the Jews. "Your substance is that of God Himself," said the Sufi teacher. "Whoso knows himself has light," said Laotse, the Chinese seer.

The Self eternally is,—not a series of momentary sensations but a changeless and eternal truth. The Self is perennial, ancient, older than the *akasa* or ether.

21. Who knoweth the Self is indestructible and eternal, unborn and immutable, how can such a person slay, O Arjuna, or cause anyone to slay?



*Who knoweth* : true knowledge is realisation, not book study or intellectual apprehension. The man of realisation sees that the Self is but a witness, not a doer : in this realisation is *mukti* or liberation.

22. As a man casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, even so does the embodied soul cast off worn-out bodies and wear others that are new.

These new bodies, must they necessarily be physical for all? They who come to this earth,—the "dark planet,"—wear physical frames. But may not some go to some shining stars and wear more refined garments, more radiant vehicles? The physical body is referred to here as a garment : is it not, for some, a prison-house? Birth is entry of the embodied soul into the mystery of matter. The lesson to learn is one of control over sensations.

The Eternal Spirit doth not move from place to place. But the *jiva*, the embodied soul, moves from one body to another. How? He gathers to himself a *manas* (mind), a *prana* (life) and a body (*anna*), according to its need in the new birth. When the physical body (*anna*) of the earlier birth is worn out, the *prana* and mental sheaths (bodies) still remain. They accompany the soul,—the psychic being,—in its journey in the new birth. The physical body is an embodiment of the soul.

In the *Shanti Parva* of the *Mahabharata*, another picture is given,—also, a beautiful one,—that of a tenant leaving an old dilapidated house and occupying a new house.

Death, thus, is but the gateway to a new life.

23. Weapons cleave him not, nor fire burneth him. Waters wet him not, nor wind drieth him away.

24. Uncleavable is He. He cannot be burnt. He cannot be wetted nor dried. He is eternal and all-pervading. He is unchanging and immovable. He is ancient,—the same for ever.

The soul is unlike matter. Neither fire nor sword nor wind can touch him. Set a house on fire and things in the house will also be burnt. But it is different with the soul in the body. Burn the body,—the house of the soul,—but the soul is not burnt.

It is true, matter is indestructible, but forms of matter change repeatedly. The soul changeth not.



25. Unmanifest, unthinkable and unchanging,—he is called. Therefore, knowing him as such, thou shouldst not grieve.

The senses and the mind cannot grasp the soul. How, then, may the soul be known? If the heart becomes pure, the light of the soul is reflected in it.

26. Even if thou thinkest that the Self is subjected constantly to birth and death, and is not of eternal duration, even then, O Mighty-armed (Arjuna), thou hast no cause to grieve.

27. For certain is death for the born, and certain is birth for the dead. Therefore, over the inevitable, thou shouldst not grieve.

There is a round of birth and death in nature. Why grieve over the passing of personalities? They come and go. The inevitable is without a remedy and must be accepted in a spirit of resignation.

28. Before birth, beings are not manifest to our human senses. In the interim between birth and death, they are manifest. At death they go to the unmanifest again. What is there, Arjuna, in this to grieve over?

As Shakespeare said :—"Our daily life is rounded with a sleep." What room is there for grief?

The *Mahabharata* says :—"He hath come from the unseen and hath gone back to the unseen. He is not thine, nor thou his. Why this vain lamentation?"

You do not see the beginning nor the end, only a little between. Why grieve ye, then? From the unseen he cometh : to the unseen he returneth.

29. As a marvel one regardeth him; as a marvel another speaketh of him; as a marvel another heareth of him; yet, having heard, none indeed knoweth him.

The truth of the Atman is open to all, but many have not the urge to seek the truth. Many suffer from doubts. Many are scared away by difficulties. Only a few there be who face the perils of the pilgrimage and reach the goal. They who attain are lost in wonder.

Wonder,—they all exclaim. Wonder of wonders! *Ascharyavat!* Yet no one seems to understand the Atman.



The Atman is unknown to most of us, for we have ceased to be childlike. As we grow in years, we lose the sense of wonder. This wonder-sense must we recover, if we will recover the lost Atman.

And who is a child? He who believes in loveliness, who sees wonder,—who believes in love and sees a "world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower!"

We are not awake to the wonder of life. The Beloved comes each day to touch us, to pour Himself into us, to meet us in the Spirit, to lift us to a plane above desire. As a saint of Upper India says :—

"Only through Thee can I meet with Thee, and that in a moment of time.

Never of myself can this thing be, though countless ages pass!"

Who hath beheld the Atman? The Rishi of the *Kathopanishad* says :—"Even when one has beheld and heard and proclaimed It, none has understood It! The Atman, the Self, is attained by very few. And they exclaim :—"Ascharyavat!" "As a marvel,—a wonder!" "Wonder," "marvel," is the Atman.

Beyond this one word, "wonder," "marvel," who may speak of him, the Atman? "The chariot of speech finds no track on which to go!" Therefore, the Rishi says :—"To their questionings offer them silence, only silence,—and a finger pointing the way!" "No easy task it is," writes al-Ghazali, the mystic of Islam, "to discover the unclouded glory (the Spirit) that lies behind the veil."

Wrapt in silence, the soul learns more in a single glance than the busy brain and the restless senses in all their toil and noise.

30. This, the indweller in all beings,—the Life within all,—is invulnerable. Therefore, O Arjuna, thou shouldst not grieve for any creature.

The Lord teaches that the Atman is the marvellous one and he indwells in all beings, is imperishable and eternal. The Atman cannot be killed or harmed. Death is no essential loss : the Atman abides. The form, the body, dies : the Atman, the Self, survives.

Was not this the teaching of the forest Yogi to Alexander :—"Your sword cannot kill me. I am immortal!"

All forms are transient : they pass away. But Life behind the forms, the Real, the Atman, the Self, is eternal and perisheth not. So cease from vain lamentation over the passing of a form.



31. Be mindful of thy duty and falter not; for there is no greater good for a true warrior than righteous war.

A *kshatrya* (warrior) must not pick unjust quarrels but, when the cause is just, let him stand up to defend his countrymen. Righteous war is a *kshatrya's svadharma*, a law of action. To maintain order,—not to renounce,—is his duty. So we read in the *Mahabharata* :—"He who saves from destruction is a *kshatrya*." And again :—"There are only two types of men who can pierce the constellation of the sun and reach the sphere of Brahman : the one is the *sanyasin* steeped in *yoga*, and the other is the warrior who fights and falls on the battle-field."

When you do your *dharma*, you worship God.

32. Happy, indeed, are the warriors to whom comes such a war,—comes unsought,—opening for them a gateway to heaven.

A just fight leads to heaven. Fighting for the right opens a gate to paradise.

33. But if thou wilt not carry on this righteous warfare, thou wilt cast away thine own duty and thine honour, and thou wilt gather guilt.

Duty and honour, both call thee, Arjuna, to take part in this just fight. Not to fight would be a sin and would be dishonourable, too.

"Men of Athens, honour thy flag!" was the teaching given to Athenian youths. And to the Aryan youth was the teaching given to fight for *dharma* and *kirti* (honour).

A nation that will not fight in *dharma-yuddha* and so not guard its rights cannot retain its vitality. If a nation would live, let it be prepared to die!

34. Besides, men will ever recount thy dishonour and for one, who has been honoured, dishonour is worse than death.

35. The great warriors will think that through fear thou hast withdrawn from battle. And they who hold thee in high esteem will make light of thee.

36. Many unseemly words will be uttered by thine enemies, slandering thy strength. Could anything be more painful?



37. If thou art killed, thou wilt win heaven. If thou art victorious, thou wilt enjoy the earth. Therefore, arise, O Son of Kunti (Arjuna), and brace thine arms for battle.

38. Taking alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, gird thee for battle. For so thou shalt not sin.

Krishna has appealed to Arjuna's self-interest in the earlier *slokas*. He has also appealed to Arjuna's sense of duty in still earlier *slokas*. In this *sloka*, He appeals to the highest, the motive of *arpanam*, dedication to the Divine. To whatever motive be the appeal, the main exhortation is,—“vindicate justice.”

39. Thus far have I spoken to thee of the Sankhya. Harken now to the teaching of the Yoga, by following which thou shalt cast away the bondage of works.

By Yoga is not meant the Yoga of Patanjali. Nor does Sankhya mean the system of philosophy known by that name. The latter is dualistic : but the Sankhya of the Gita is monistic. The dualism of *purusha* and *prakriti*, self and non-self, is the very centre of the later Sankhya system but is, in the Gita, transcended, since both *purusha* and *prakriti* are aspects of That or the *Avyakta* (the Unmanifest), and are ultimately absorbed in It, the Supreme Self being regarded as the Lord of all.

The Sankhya of the Gita is a body of teaching that gives intellectual expression to the intuition of the Unchanging One,—the One Self, the One Atman. This Sankhya lays stress on knowledge and renunciation of desire, and teaches that the Self and the body are distinct, that the Atman is indestructible and unmoved by the events of the world.

There is a danger lest, in an effort at intellectual explanation, the original intuitive perception may be obscured, a danger that mere knowledge, divorced from activity, may come to be regarded as the entire path, instead of as one aspect thereof. Therefore, must the seeker keep in mind that the sankhyan wisdom is not enough but must be galvanised by life, must be integrated with action, with yoga. Mere sankhyan wisdom may lead to rigid isolation in a cave or forest, when what is needed is not outer but inner detachment from the *maya* of life,—the shadow-shapes of things which come and go. This inner detachment is his who does not run away



from life but girds himself for the battle of life, for work, for action.

The sankhyan wisdom must be supplemented by yoga "Listen now to the Yoga," says the Master. It is the *buddhi-yoga* which corrects the sankhyan "forced isolation" from life. True *kaivalya*, emancipation, is not through a forced isolation from life, but through inner detachment from the lower impulses and appetites, from *trishnas* and cravings of the "ego."

So the Gita emphasises *buddhi-yoga*, that is union with the *buddhi*,—union of the mind with the *buddhi*. The mind is, so often, united to the senses. The mind must transcend the senses and be united with the *buddhi*.

What is the *buddhi*? In the Gita, the *buddhi* is not,—as in the later Sankhya,—one of the intellectual faculties. The *buddhi* is higher than the faculty by which the mind comes to a decision, after a period of doubt and hesitation. The *buddhi* does give "determined knowledge," bereft of doubt, but this knowledge is more than intellectual : it is a living knowledge. It is intuition of the Self, the Atman. This intuition transcends the limitations of individuality : this intuition is of the super-mental level, is non-individual, is the same for all. The *buddhi* is the source of all real knowledge.

When the mind is united with the *buddhi*,—is *buddhi-yukta*,—the "knots of the heart" are cut, the fetters fall,—the fetters which bind the *jiva* in the prison of separate individuality. The *jiva*, then, escapes from the "tangle of delusions," rises above the *dvandas* (pairs of opposites), stands unshaken by pleasure and pain.

How may one become a *buddhi-yukta*? What is the method?

The Gita recommends "skill in action,"—balance, sameness, equanimity in failure as in success, indifference to results, utter detachment. This is the method of *karma-yoga*, control of the senses and desires, inner withdrawal not from action, not from the world, but from desire-life of the senses. And this is achieved when you rise beyond negative restraint to a concentration on the Atman, feeling him, if not seeing him. The sense-life is not abandoned, as is recommended by some Sankhyas. Life's duties have to be done. But a withdrawal is to be made to the higher levels where the mind is united with the *buddhi*.

So through selfless action, through inner detachment, the mind is purified. And the seeker will see reflected in his heart the light of the *buddhi* and, in this light, he will see overhead the Star of the Supreme Atman, shining in the darkness,—the Star of a radiance supreme that shines "beyond the broken lamps."



40. In this path, no effort is ever lost, and no obstacle prevails. Even a little of this *dharma* (righteousness) saves from great fear.

In this path, unfinished attempt is not wasted. No effort is in vain. Even a little of this practice trains in moral discipline and saves from the fear of *samsara*. For here no fruit is sought : what is sought is liberation.

41. This *buddhi*, O Arjuna, is resolute and one-pointed. But the thoughts,—the mental states,—of the irresolute are many-branched and endless.

*Buddhi* is discrimination. He who has it has a single ideal. Those who have it not are many-minded men : they wander after many aims.

The man of *buddhi* has intuition of truth and so is one-pointed. The men who lack this *buddhi* are moved not by a vision of truth but by desires and appetites : they wander after conflicting and varied aims.

*Buddhi* is his who treads the path of *karma-yoga* : but endless are the aims of those who, lacking *buddhi*, are dominated by desires. *Buddhi* is *eka* : desires are *ananta*. *Buddhi* is concentration and consecration : desires are distraction.

42. Flowery words are proclaimed by the undiscerning, the unwise ones, who rejoice in the letter of the Veda and who contend :—"There is naught but this!"

Here is the Gita's warning against sectarianism, ritualism, dogmatism, and against worship of the letter of the scripture. Krishna does not deny the value,—cultural and spiritual,—of scriptural study. In Vedic rites and ceremonies are veiled eternal truths. Ceremonies produce a psychic atmosphere : they help a person to be in tune, more and more, with the other worlds. But they must not degenerate into dead forms. God must be honoured with life, not mere lips.

Superior to rites and ceremonies,—which open the door to heaven,—is the *karma-yoga* which leads to liberation.

43. They are full of worldly desires. Their goal is heaven. Rebirth is their fruit of action. They prescribe various specialised ceremonies for the attainment of enjoyment and power.

They seek material rewards here or in heaven (*svarga-loka*).



But the *karma-yogi* seeks no reward. His *karma* (action) is a *yagna*, a sacrifice, an offering to the Lord.

44. For them, who cling to pleasure and power, whose minds are carried away by these words (of the Veda), is not meant this *buddhi*, which is steadily bent on contemplation.

Men who cling to pleasure and power do not have the concentration of will without which contemplation is not possible: Purification is the means to contemplative life.

45. The Veda deals with the three-fold *gunas*. Be thou free, O Arjuna, from the three *gunas*. Be free from the dualities (pairs of opposites). Be firmly rooted in purity, in eternal truth, careless of possessions, (acquisition or preservation). Be possessed of the Self,—a Master !

The Veda teaches concerning the three *gunas*, the three qualities or forms of energy. They are :—*sattva* or the quality of intelligence; *rajas*, activity or passion, the quality of the mind; and *tamas*, inertia or darkness, the quality of the body. The three *gunas* belong to the realm of mind and matter. The Atman is different from them. The Atman is the eternal witness, the eternal consciousness, the eternal bliss.

If thou would rise to the Atman, free yourself from the three *gunas*. Free yourself from the pairs of opposites (good and evil). Free yourself from having and holding,—from the sad righteousness which calculates. Be firmly rooted in the *Sattva*,—not the *sattva-guna*, but eternal Truth. Be self-ruled,—simple, satisfied, established in the Self, in the consciousness of the Atman, reliant on God !

46. All the Vedas are as useful to an enlightened Brahmin as is a pond in a place flooded with water everywhere.

The "enlightened Brahmin" is one who is not merely a Brahmin by birth but who is a knower of God.

And as the water of a pond is not so important to a man who lives in a place flooded with water, so are rites and ceremonies,—mentioned in the Veda,—not so important to the illumined one who hath known the Indweller, the Self.

47. To action alone hast thou a right, never to its



fruit. Let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor be thou to inaction attached.

You have the right to work but for the sake of work alone. You have no right to the fruits of work. Find your full reward of doing right in right. Let your motive be right deeds, not the fruit which comes from deeds.

Labour,—but care not for the fruit of labour. In this teaching is the seed of true socialism. Accumulation of fruits of labour is property : and property is, often, tyranny.

48. Perform action, O Arjuna! with heart fixed on the Lord, renouncing attachment and balanced evenly in success and failure. Equilibrium,—at-one-ment, evenness of mind,—is yoga.

Here is a definition of yoga. Yoga is *samatvam*, equilibrium, balance, inner poise, serenity, tranquillity. Yoga is harmony.

When you are at peace with God and man, you attain to yoga. Yoga is balance. To be of balanced mind is to view with complete indifference success or failure, is to work in a spirit of utter detachment.

49. Far inferior is mere *karma* (action) to *buddhi-yoga*, O Arjuna! Take thou refuge in *buddhi*. Pitiably are they who work for fruit.

Desire-dominated *karma* (action) is inferior to *buddhi* or illuminated mind. Sordid are the lives of men who are driven by desires to work for fruit. Fredrick, the Great, was a man of tremendous activity. "I have been unhappy all my life," he said.

Miserable are they who work for fruits and so fall into the snare of desires. Work of the right type is a bridge between *karma* and *bhakti*, between *karma* and *gnana*. Right *karma* enables one to rise to God-love and God-realisation.

50. He who is *buddhi-yukta* (united to *buddhi*, pure reason, or intelligence, or understanding) casts away in this life both good and evil. Therefore strive for yoga. Yoga is skill in action.

*Karma-yoga* is "skill in action," for it transmutes deeds so that they become means of freedom, not of bondage. The *Gnana Vasishtha* says :—"If the thief is known and served, he becomes a friend and ceases to be a thief."



By "skill in action," you do not renounce action, yet you get rid of selfishness. And by casting away both good and evil, you rise to a status higher than the ethical. Your mind rests in God. You do your duty and, in success or failure, you touch the centre of harmony within you.

51. The wise, of illuminated understanding, renounce the fruit which action yieldeth; and liberated from the bonds of birth, they go to the sorrowless state.

When the mind is purified and the *buddhi* is illuminated, action is no longer a source of bondage. Action becomes a means of freedom. Then the *jiva* rises on wings of *bhakti* and *gnana* to the seat of bliss,—the *anamayam pada*,—to *moksha* (liberation).

The steps in the ascent to *moksha* are :—

- (1) *karma-yoga* : renouncing all fruits of action;
- (2) awaking of *buddhi* : wisdom;
- (3) freedom from bondage of birth; and
- (4) attainment of the eternal bliss of God-realisation.

52. When thy *buddhi* shall cross the whirl of delusion, then shalt thou rise to indifference as to what has been heard and what is yet to be heard.

The delusion is the *moha* which turns us to sense-objects, away from the eternal.

When the intellect has cleared itself of its delusions, you attain to true detachment, indifference to what is said, this way or that, in scriptural text or creed.

53. When thy intelligence, which is bewildered by *shruti* ( conflicting interpretation of Vedic texts ), shall stand unshaken and stable in spirit,—in *samadhi*,—then shalt thou attain to yoga ( insight).

*Samadhi* is concentration of the self in the Self. It is communion with the Divine Self. We enter into *samadhi* when we rise above ritualism and do our duty without attachment, when we act with equanimity, in harmony with the Divine Will.

The unaided *manas* (mind) is agitated by conflicting and partial views of Reality. But when union with the *buddhi* has been achieved, the *jiva* escapes from the "tangle of delusion" and stands immovable, unshaken by pleasure and pain,—stands firm and fixed in the One Reality.

This union with the *buddhi* is achieved through the method



of "skill in action," through balanced attitude, through equanimity in failure and in success.

*Arjuna said :—*

54. What is the description of him who has this steady *prajna* (wisdom), who is steadfast in *samahi* (holy contemplation), absorbed in Brahman, O Krishna? How does he,—the man of concentrated illumined consciousness,—speak? How does he sit? How does he walk?

Arjuna asks for the marks of the ideal man, the man of perfect realisation, the perfect yogi, the man of *sthita prajna*, the man calm in wisdom, the man of utter peace of spirit,—in *samadhi* and out of *samadhi* (when engaged in his duties),—the perfect sage.

*Prajna* is wisdom, *sophia*. The man of wisdom is one whose centre is in the Atman, whose circumference is the wide world. He is spirit-centred (atmavan).

How does he sit? He sits "harmonised,—I his supreme goal" (*sloka* 61). He sits *buddhi-yukta*, united in *buddhi*, free from *karma-bandhana* (*slokas* 55 and 64).

How does he speak? He talks without anxiety, loosed from passion, fear and anger (*sloka* 56).

How does he move? He moveth on to Peace.

The central note is detachment. He (1) unites himself with the Reality within; and (2) detaches himself from the desire-life of the senses, as a tortoise withdraws its limbs from contacts with the outer world (*sloka* 58).

*The Blessed Lord said :—*

55. When a man puts away, O Arjuna, all the desires of his mind and is satisfied in the Self by the Self, then is he called *sthita-prajna*, the steady seer of wisdom.

Casting away the desires which shake the mind, he finds bliss in the Atman through the Atman. He attains the ineffable and infinite bliss of God-realisation.

56. He whose mind is free from anxiety amid pains, indifferent amid pleasures, loosed from passion, fear and rage, he is called a seer illumined.

57. He who, on every side, is without attachment,



who neither likes nor dislikes, whatever hap of fair or foul, such an one has understanding established in wisdom.

The sage is a man of spontaneity : he is without attachment. He is not a man of repression : repression has its reaction. He is a man of will-power, pure and strong. He is a man of dispassion, free from sensations. His very desire for pleasure is gone. In gloom and in glory he hath an established mind, firm-set in wisdom. He receives whatever comes without excitement,—calmly, as a gift from God.

His desire is utterly dead : and his gaze is centred upon the Atman within. There is no wavering, no turning back,—in waking thought or sleep,—to the sense-world.

58. He who withdraws his senses from the objects of sense on every side, as a tortoise draws in his limbs (into a shell), his understanding is firmly set (in wisdom).

Conquest of the senses from within is emphasised. Alas ! we are fed too much with the food of sensations.

The simile of the tortoise is illuminating. The tortoise, naturally and without strain, draws in its limbs. So the sage attains an easy mastery over the senses and enters into bliss.

The seer sits, then, in the midst of the world, controlling the senses,—as the tortoise sits within its shell,—withdrawn from all objects.

59. The objects of sense turn away from the embodied soul who abstains from feeding on them, but relish for them remains. Even relish turneth away from him when the Supreme is seen.

Renunciation should be not merely of the sense-objects : the inner renunciation of desire of taste is necessary. This inner renunciation is his who, filled with God-love, has entered into the joy of God-realisation.

To see the Supreme is to taste the Lord. O taste and see that the Lord is good ! When you see the Supreme, the least vestige of sensual longing vanishes.

60. O Arjuna ! the excited senses impetuously carry away the mind of even a wise man striving after perfection.

The state of the illumined one,—the sage,—is not easy to



reach. Even wise men are carried away by unruly senses. You may close the doors of senses, but the taste and relish for sense-objects remains. You may not conquer desire without God-vision.

61. Having brought all (his senses) under control, he should sit harmonised, in his supreme goal. For he, whose senses are mastered, his understanding is firmly set.

Meditation is the way to self-mastery. Meditate on Me,—says Krishna. Is not Vasudeva the innermost Self?

62. When a man dwells in his mind on the objects of sense, he conceives an attachment to them. From attachment ariseth desire. From desire anger cometh forth.

Think of sense-objects and you will get attached to them. Grow attached and you become addicted. Thwart your addiction, it turns to anger.

It is not enough that your body is not in contact with sense-objects : they must keep away, also, from your mind. Mental contemplation of objects will lead to attachment.

In thought is the seed of the sin.

63. From anger arises bewilderment; from bewilderment, loss of memory; from loss of memory, the destruction of understanding (*buddhi*); from destruction of *buddhi*, he perishes.

When the mind is bewildered, confused, you forget the lesson of experience : there is the loss of memory. Forgetting experience, you lose discrimination. Losing discrimination, you miss the purpose of life. It is the real loss of man himself.

The destruction of understanding (*buddhi*), Shankara points out, is the inability of the inner sense (*antah karana*) to discriminate between right and wrong.

64. But a man of disciplined mind, who moves among sense-objects, with the senses under control and free from attachment and aversion,—he goeth to *prasadam*, peace.

Such a man, with neither lust nor hate in his heart, moves among the things of the world safely, and he enters into peace.



The Gita's emphasis is on discipline, not starving the senses. Control the senses : do not run away from the world. Be a hero! Develop will-power!

The *prasadam* referred to is equilibrium and purity, inner equipoise and harmony which lead to God-vision. The *prasadam* is the peace which cometh to the pure in heart.

65. Having attained peace, there is for him an end of all sorrow; of such a man of peace the understanding soon attaineth equilibrium.

All sorrow melts into the peace of him who is pure in spirit: his quiet mind is established in serenity for ever.

He becomes a mirror : a distracted mind cannot see truth.

66. For the uncontrolled, there is no *buddhi* (understanding); nor for the uncontrolled is there concentration. For him without concentration, there is no peace : and for the unpeaceful, how can there be happiness?

67. When the mind runs after the moving senses, it carries away *prajna* (wisdom, understanding), even as the gale carries away a ship on the waters.

68. Therefore, O Arjuna, he whose senses are all withdrawn from the objects of sense, his *buddhi* is firmly set.

69. What is night for all beings is, for the disciplined soul, the time of waking. What is the time of waking for all beings is night for the *muni*,—the sage of vision.

The true mystic is awake when others are asleep : when others are awake to the world, the sense-life, the mystic who sees is asleep to *maya*, the phenomenal world.

He sleeps to the things of the earth to which ordinary men are awake. He awakes to the truths to which ordinary men are asleep. The centre of his life has shifted from the world and its possessions to God and His imperishable Love.

70. He into whom all desires flow as rivers flow into the sea, which, though ever being filled, is ever motionless,—he attaineth peace, not he who hugs his



desires.

Rivers flow into the sea but the sea is not disturbed. So desires flow into the mind of the seer, but he is not disturbed.

Experience enters into the life of the spiritual-minded man, but does not disturb the content of his peace.

71. He who forsaketh all desires and acts free from longing and is selfless and without egoism,—he goeth to peace.

72. This is the divine state (brahmisthiti), O Arjuna ! Having attained thereto, none is ever bewildered. Whoso, even at the end (the hour of death), is established in that state, he goeth to the *brahma-nirvana*, the bliss of God.

In this state, Brahman and he become one. All illusion ceases : the bliss of the Atman is reached. Having attained this state, he is deceived no more.

This Brahmic state is emancipation from the bondage of matter. To be one with the Divine is to be free from all the delusion that springs from contact with the world. To persist in this condition and so to die wins the final bliss of oneness with the One. There is release from re-birth into this restless world.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, the Scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this be the second chapter, entitled :

*Sankhya Yoga*

Or The Yoga of Knowledge.



## CHAPTER III

### THE PATH OF ACTION

*Arjuna said :—*

1. If it be thought by Thee, O Krishna, that understanding (or knowledge) is superior to action, why then dost Thou urge me to do this terrible action?

Arjuna draws a wrong construction of Krishna's teaching. The picture of the sage, as drawn by Krishna, is, Arjuna feels, very fascinating. It is the picture of the master-man who lives in contemplation of God. And so Arjuna asks :—"Master! if contemplation of the Supreme is so beautiful, why should I engage in action, this dreadful action, this war?"

Arjuna feels that Sri Krishna considers knowledge of Brahman as superior to any sort of action. If knowledge is what matters, then why should Arjuna engage himself in such cruel and terrible action which involves killing of *gurus* and kinsmen? "I cannot understand," says Arjuna. "Speak to me, Master, in a simple way. If knowledge is superior to action, why should I do this savage deed?"

2. With these perplexing words, Thou dost confuse my understanding. Tell me distinctly the one thing by which I can attain to the highest good.

In answer to Arjuna's question, Krishna unfolds His doctrine of action.

*The Blessed Lord said :—*

3. In this world a two-fold way of life has been taught of yore by Me, O Arjuna! There is the path of knowledge (*gnana-yoga*),—of the Sankhyas,—for men of contemplation; and there is the path of works (*karma-yoga*),—of the Yogis,—for men of action.



The ancient scriptures taught Sankhya and Yoga. Sankhya is knowledge. Yoga is action. Many men separate the two, as Arjuna does : but the true yogi does not divide them. The two are inseparable.

*Gnana* and *karma* are in harmony : there is no conflict between the two. There is only a question of discipline. One man has the discipline of *gnana* : another has the discipline of *karma*. Those who follow the discipline of *gnana* are called Sankhyas. Those who follow the discipline of *nishkama karma* (selfless action) are called Karma-yogis.

*Gnana yoga* is, also, called *sanyasa yoga*, because true *gnana* leads to *sanyasa*. Sri Shankar Acharya, in his commentary on the Gita, urges that a true *gnani* must be a *sanyasi*. But to be a *sanyasi* does not mean to be homeless. The Gita teaches that true *sanyasa* is not outer but inner renunciation of desires. Raja Janaka lived in a palace, but was non-attached. He was a *gnani* and practised *sanyasa*.

*Gnana Yoga*, *sanyasa yoga* and *sankhya yoga* are synonymous. The terms are interchangeable.

According to Hindu sages, *gnana* does not mean book-knowledge. A *gnani* is not a book-worm. A man may quote from books which he has read but he may not have *gnana*. *Gnana* is direct perception. A true *gnani* is a *rishi*, a seer. He sees truth. He is not a mere reporter. He does not talk by hearsay. He speaks because he sees and feels. He has *sakshatkara* or direct perception.

*Gnana* (wisdom) is not gathered from books, but from inner life. *Gnana* means self-realisation. Hence the value of silence. Wisdom comes in hours of illuminated silence. The more we cultivate the habit of silence, the more we gather wisdom.

*Gnana* is culture of meditation : *karma* is culture of will. Both lead to wisdom. *Karma* of the right type,—action which seeks no fruit, no reward,—is a means to wisdom.

4. Man winneth not freedom from activity by refraining from action, nor by mere renunciation can he reach perfection.

The ideal of *karma yoga* is *naishkarmya*. It is the state where you are unaffected by work. This state cannot be reached by giving up all actions. Be active, says the Gita, but do not have the desire for fruit of action. What is demanded is not renunciation of work, but renunciation of selfish desire.

Work! Produce! But do not produce abortions or ugly things. Create the beautiful. And you will achieve the beautiful in the measure you are unselfish.

Perfection is *siddhi*. And *siddhi* is not attained through



external *sanyasa* (renunciation). By going away from the world to a forest or a mountain peak, you will not get *siddhi*.

Tranquillity of mind is the secret of *siddhi*. The test of a man of *siddhi* is two-fold :—(1) he is a man of great discipline, of *tapasya*, self-control : he has controlled his tastes and appetites; and (2) he has reached a state of self-annihilation, *fanna*. He has learnt the science of "killing the ego."

Two of the ways to attain to *siddhi* are :—(1) negate the mind; and (2) negate the world. To lay the mind in tranquillity, it is necessary to negate the world. A man of meditation should say to himself :—Money, house, family, wife, sons, daughters, position, influence, honour,—all these belong to *maya*, are impermanent : alone the Atman abides! This conviction should sink into the mind.

The man of meditation should see that he does not feel perturbed by the stream or currents of conflicting thoughts which pass through his mind. He should be like a sportsman and take things not too seriously. True meditation should make one joyous and radiant, vibrant and vital.

Negative thoughts are not helpful. But to negate the world and the mind is a positive act of energy.

To lay the mind in tranquillity, practise meditation in fellowship with a great soul : have points of contact with him. His presence is very helpful, because out of him go healing vibrations.

The mark of a truly spiritual man is tranquillity, deep profound tranquillity of mind. A truly spiritual man is undisturbed by events of life.

5. No one can, even for a moment, remain really actionless : for everyone is helplessly driven to action by the *gunas* (qualities or impulses) born of *prakriti* (nature).

6. Who sitteth, restraining his organs of action, but dwelling in his mind on objects of senses,—that bewildered, confused, deluded man is called a hypocrite (a man of false conduct).

Action, *karma* is inevitable. Inactivity is physically impossible : the mere maintenance of the body is not possible without action.

To live is to act : to think is to act. True non-action is not physical abstention from work, but inner detachment,—conquest of craving, freedom from desire. True inaction is renouncement not of work but of all sense of "me" and "mine."



of egoism, self-sense, *moha*, attachment. It is self-surrender to the Supreme.

Physical renouncement of action is impossible. The eye cannot choose but see : the ear cannot choose but hear : the body cannot choose but feel : the mind cannot choose but think. Do what you will, you cannot escape *karma* (action). Would you stand still as a pillar? Even then you do the *karma* of standing as a pillar!

By avoiding action, you are not automatically led on to perfection, but to "nature" (*prakriti*) : and "nature" acts.

In "nature" there are three *chakras*, three centres of energy. From them come involuntarily forces which set in motion the senses of the body. These three centres are *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. These three centres of energy act. And even if you externally refrain from the senses and organs by effort, yet must your desire brood upon the objects of sense. And by artificially repressing the desire, you become a false pietist. Externally you give up work : but your desire dotes on it! You are a hypocrite.

There is a story of a monk who read religious books. One day, he saw a girl and was invaded by passion. Outwardly, he was seen sitting quietly in a cell and reading scriptures, but his mind would wander and dream of the girl. His *indriyas* (senses) were not in contact with the girl, but his mind was. Such a man, the Gita calls a hypocrite.

The senses (*indriyas*) are a part of *prakriti* : so is *manas*, the mind. To lead a pure life, it is not enough to conquer the *indriyas* only : the mind, too, must be conquered. We must conquer *prakriti*.

To conquer *prakriti*, it is necessary to conquer (1) *indriyas* (senses); (2) *manas*, mind; (3) *ahankara*, ego-sense; and (4) *avyakta*. *Avyakta* is the sub-conscious in us. From the hidden depths of the sub-conscious, suddenly a passion starts. So to conquer the sub-conscious is to be truly and vitally spiritual.

One good method to conquer the sub-conscious is to live in fellowship with a pure one. It is desirable, also, to keep the sleeping room apart, fit it up with pictures of holy men, keep in it sacred books, and burn incense. Meditate on one of the beautiful texts in a holy book before going to sleep.

7. But he who controls the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, and, without attachment, engages the organs of action in *karma yoga* (the path of work), he excels.

In *karma yoga* you do *karma* (action), yet you rise above



*karma*. You work without attachment. You work without a desire for "fruit" or "reward." You discard all sense of possession. You see all things as manifestations of the One,—the Real; the Life Eternal.

8. Do thou thy allotted work, for action is better than inaction. Even the pilgrimage of thy body is not possible without activity.

Activity is better than inertia. The bare maintenance of your body is not possible without activity. If you sit idle, the pilgrimage of the body will suffer : you will fall ill. Idleness breeds illness.

9. The world is in bondage to work, except when the work is done as sacrifice. Therefore, O Arjuna, do thy work for the sake of that, free from all attachment.

The world, alas! is imprisoned in its activity. Only that action is free which is done as worship of God. So perform action sacramentally, and be free from attachment to results.

"Do thy work for the sake of that." "That" refers to *yagna*. According to Shankara, *Yagna* is Vishnu, the Lord. *Yagna*, therefore, means (1) the Lord; and (2) sacrifice.

What kind of work is right? Work done for the sake of the Lord,—the divine work offered as sacrifice.

Sacrifice is self-denial, and self-denial becomes self-realisation.

10. In ancient days, Prajapati,—the Lord of creatures,—created men along with sacrifice and said :—"By this shall ye bring forth, and this shall be unto you Kamadhuk, the cow of plenty, which will yield the milk of your desires."

The Lord of all beings created men, assigning to each his duty. "Do this," He said, "and you shall prosper. Sacrifice, *yagna*, shall be your *kamadhuk*, your cow of plenty. " Sacrifice, *yagna* is the great fulfiller of the needs of men. Sacrifice is the purifier of life, the uplifter of the soul.

*Yagna* is sacrifice, not in the Jewish sense of "propitiation," not in the Christian sense of "purification," but in the deeper sense of "transfiguration," of becoming like the God we adore. of being remade and renewed in God, *Yagna* is consecration. *Yagna* is the sacrifice involved in yoga. Yoga is being united



with God, is realisation of God. And this union or realisation is through renunciation of self and devotion of the finite to the Infinite. In the yoga of knowledge (*gnana-yoga*), we renounce or sacrifice ignorance. In the yoga of deeds (*karma-yoga*), we renounce results, rewards. In the yoga of love (*bhakti-yoga*), we renounce attachment and aversion, like and dislike, attraction and repulsion.

11. By *yagna* or sacrifice, nourish ye the gods : and they will nourish you. Thus nourishing one another, ye shall attain to the Supreme Good.

12. Nourished by *yagna* (sacrifice), the gods will give you the blessings you desire. He who enjoyeth what is given by the gods without returning them aught,—is, verily, a thief.

So we read in the *Vishnu Purana* :—"Nourished by the sacrifice, the gods nourish mankind by sending forth rain."

The gods are protecting powers, the guardians of men. There is the law of mutual dependence and the necessity of co-operation between men and gods. The gods give guidance from above : they govern and guide the cosmic functions.

The cycle of manifestation turns on sacrifice. And the teaching is given that we must share with others and not merely cook for ourselves. So we read in the *Manava Dharma Shastra* :—"He only eats sin who cooks for his own sake!"

Let your eating become a sacrament. So (1) offer your daily food to God; and (2) share it with others.

Selfish possession of wealth is anti-social and unspiritual. All wealth is (1) a gift from God; and (2) a trust for the service of the poor.

13. The good, who eat what is left from the sacrifice, are released from all sins. But the impious, who dress food for their own sakes,—they, verily, eat sin!

"He that eateth of Me,—the same shall live by Me." Get God's strength in you by offering what you have to God. The food you offer to God and share with others is the sacrament which builds up the body.

14. From food creatures come into being; from rain is the production of food; rain proceedeth from *yagna* or sacrifice; and sacrifice is born of action (*karma*).



The cosmic wheel rolls on,—the wheel of cosmic life : it is sustained by *yagna* or sacrifice.

15. Know thou that from Brahma, *karma* (action) groweth, and Brahma from the Imperishable cometh. Therefore, Brahma,—the all-permeating,—is ever present in sacrifice.

The world itself is a great sacrifice of the One Purusha who offered Himself as a sacrifice. His limbs, we read, were scattered to all the quarters of space. This great sacrifice of the Purusha sustains the worlds.

Thus out of sacrificial action sprung the worlds. And by sacrifice of countless thinkers and heroes of the past is the world maintained.

16. He who, in this world, does not turn the wheel of sacrifice thus set in motion, is sinful of life and sensual in his delight. He, O Arjuna, liveth in vain.

Lost is the life of him who lives for himself.

17. But the man who rejoiceth in the Atman (the Self) alone, who is content in the Self, and with the Self is satisfied,—for him, verily, there is no work that needs to be done.

The man, who hath his joy and peace in the Atman, is no longer obliged to perform any kind of action.

He has his happiness in the inner life. He is free and no longer burdened with a sense of duty. He has nothing to gain for himself. Yet even he works,—for the welfare of the world. He escapes from "private" action and unites himself with the cosmic action,—the Divine Will,—the sacrificial action of Sri Krishna. Not for him is "dull" duty, he becomes a part of the joy of sacrifice.

18. He has no (personal) interest to gain in this world by actions done nor any by actions not done. He does not depend on any being for the attainment of any object.

Truly free is such a man. He has nothing personal to gain by action and nothing to lose by refraining from action. He is independent of everybody and everything. He is become a seer, God-absorbed. Earth's events and happenings, com-



ings and goings, pleasures and pains, have no effect on him. He is freed from a sense of duty. He transcends work. He is indifferent to work and no-work. Yet his is not the passive do-nothing life. He covets no object : he seeks nothing. He has knowledge of the Atman and, out of this knowledge, this realisation of the One-in-all, grows his sacrificial action for the welfare of the world.

19. Therefore, without attachment, perform always the action which is thy duty, for by doing work without attachment, man verily reacheth the *Parama*, the Supreme.

Do thy duty without attachment. So mayst thou reach the Ultimate Truth, the Supreme. Work without anxiety about results. Emancipated souls do not shirk work. They do not insist on not performing action. They do whatever comes to them.

Unattached work is not a cause of bondage.

20. Janaka and others, indeed, attained to perfection by action. And thou, too, shouldst perform action with a view to the welfare of the world.

Janaka is the name of a royal saint, the king of Mithila. He was an ideal *karma-yogi*. In him was work blended with unselfishness. He conquered the "sense of I and mine." He said :—"If Mithila be consumed in fire, nothing that is mine will be lost."

Janaka did not retire from the world but remained at his post for the good of others,—attaining perfection through work. He set an example to weaker brethren. Boethius has well said :—"He will never go to heaven who is content to go alone."

21. Whatever a great man does, that other men, also, do. The standard he setteth up, by that the people go.

Ordinary men follow the example of great men. Men follow : hero-worship is natural. Democracy does not mean disbelief in great men and in hero-worship.

22. There is nothing in the three worlds, O Arjuna, that should be done by Me, nor anything to be obtained which has not been obtained ; yet I mingle in action.

No work is incumbent on the Lord : yet He continually works.



because He would set up a good example to the world. General inaction would cause the ruin of the world.

23. For, if ever I mingled not in action, unwearied, men all around would follow My path, O Arjuna!

The Lord works "unwearied." So does the man who would follow Krishna. Sacrificial action is unwearied. It is not a toil, but a joy.

24. If I should cease to work, these worlds would fall into ruin and I would, then, be the author of chaos, and these people would be destroyed.

25. As the ignorant act from attachment to action, O Arjuna, so should the wise, also, act, but without attachment, with the desire to maintain the world-order.

The difference between the ignorant and the wise, the enlightened and the unenlightened is one of motive. The ignorant are selfish : the wise work without self-seeking.

26. Let no wise man (*vidvan*) unsettle the minds of the ignorant who are to action attached. But let him act in a spirit of yoga,—in harmony with Me,—thus inspiring others to act.

The truly wise man should do his duty in a spirit of detachment, making work as an offering to the Lord, and so let the unenlightened see how work may be transformed into the joy of self-offering to God.

Don't disturb the beliefs of men. Don't try to unsettle their minds. Remember that true conversion is of the heart. And set to others the example of doing the duties allotted to you in a spirit of dedication to the Divine Will.

Respect every creed, though you belong to none. Do not break the symbols which are dear to the ignorant and in which,—however imperfect,—they worship the One Divine Spirit. Approach the faith and symbols of the unenlightened with love and reverence in your heart. These symbols, too, are a stepping-stone to the larger vision.

27. While all actions are wrought by the modes of nature (the three *gunas*), the man bewildered by egoism (*ahankara*), thinketh :—"I am the doer."



28. But he, O Arjuna, who understands correctly the distinction of the soul from the modes of nature and their works, is not attached to the act, for he perceives that it is the modes which are acting on the modes.

Every action is really performed by the *gunas* (modes of *prakriti*), but man deluded by his egoism thinks :—"I am the doer." And so the unwise get entangled in their acts. But the wise learn to see that the Atman,—the true Self,—is but the detached witness, serene and impartial. Actions cannot bind the Atman, as weapons do not pierce the Atman.

In this knowledge, the wise man offers his actions to Krishna and takes his part in the great battle against suffering and sin, against the evil of his own lower nature. This battle against evil and suffering has to be fought, again and again. It is not for the wise man to rest in this world of suffering and pain.

Here is the way to attain to non-attachment,—to realise that *prakriti* (not-self) works, but the Atman is the witness. It is qualities (*gunas*) of *prakriti* which give rise to qualities of action. *Gunas* of *prakriti* produce types of action. *Gunas* operate on *gunas* : matter acts on matter. The Atman is the witness.

29. Those who are deluded by the *gunas* of nature get attached to the works produced by the *gunas*. The man who knows the whole does not unsettle the minds of the ignorant who know only a part.

The ignorant, in their delusion, identify the Atman with the *gunas*. The ignorant become tied to the senses and the action of senses.

The illumined man does not create confusion in the minds of the ignorant by refraining from work. He sets a good example to the ignorant to act, but disinterestedly.

30. Surrendering all actions unto Me, with thy thoughts resting on the Self supreme, from desire and egoism freed, and of (mental) fever cured, fight thou, O Arjuna !

Let us surrender the fruits of action to the Lord that He may scatter the blessed results of the action for the joy of mankind. Do not seek "individual happiness." Be an offering in the great sacrifice. Offer thy all to the Lord. Offer it all to Him in *shraddha* and you will, one day, experience the bliss of God (*Brahmananda*). Offer your all to Him and realise that He is



the Real Agent in all human actions. Then will His grace descend on you and you will have the fullness of *gnana*. In every act breathe out the prayer, "Thy Will be done!"

31. Who constantly practise this teaching of Mine, full of faith and free from cavil,—they, too, are released from (the bondage) of works.

32. But those who carp at My teaching and act not thereon, know them to be blind to wisdom, lost and senseless.

The Gita insists that we must *act* on the teaching given by the Lord. It is not enough to know. The knowledge must be practised, must be built in the heart. Not to act up to the teaching is to be gradually lost.

33. Even the man of knowledge behaves in accordance with his own *prakriti* (nature). Beings follow their nature. What can repression do?

34. Attachment and aversion for its objects abide in each sense. Let none come under the sway of these two. For they are his (two) enemies,—obstructors of the path.

It is true we come with an inheritance of tendencies in our *prakriti*. But they become potent when allied to attachment and aversion, so that we like forbidden pleasures and we dislike doing our duty. But these can be overcome through the aid of scripture, reflection and *satsang*.

*Prakriti*, by itself, is not a dynamic power. It is true, *prakriti* in actual life is powerful. But it has no controlling power. *Prakriti* is a powerful current and it may well drown us, if we are left alone, into the deep waters of desire. But we are not left alone, A *satpurukha*, a man of God, an inspired utterance, may serve as a boat : and if we but make up our mind to step into the boat, we may be saved.

*Raga* and *dvesha*, attachment and aversion, are our enemies : they must be conquered. How? Through *karma-yoga*. Master your likes and dislikes. The senses may be conquered by will. Do not starve the senses. Unswayed by likes and dislikes, do your duty. We are not puppets in the hands of *prakriti*. Our freedom is not cancelled by *prakriti* : our freedom is but conditioned by *prakriti*. All beings follow their own natures, (*prakriti*) : what shall restraint avail? These are but half-truths.



Men are moved by likes and dislikes within the iron circle of necessity : but not all men. A few there be who have conquered likes and dislikes, conquered attraction and aversion, conquered desire. They act from a sense of duty (*svadharma*).

So long as you act because you like, and abstain because you dislike, so long must you whirl helplessly upon the wheel : so long you are a victim of your own nature, even when you do virtuous acts. Conquer likes and dislikes. For the Atman is ever free. Express the Atman. Don't identify the Atman with the lower vehicles. Be not a victim of *prakriti*. Do not blindly suffer its domination, but dominate the play of *prakriti*.

35. Better is one's own duty (or path or law, *svadharma*), though imperfectly done, than the duty (or law) of another well discharged. Better death in (the discharge of) one's own duty. To follow another's duty is full of danger.

Better to do your own duty, however imperfectly, than to assume the duties of another person, however successfully. Prefer to die doing your own *dharma* : the *dharma* of another will bring you into spiritual danger or fearful consequences.

There is no question of higher or lower in the realm of duties. All are equally related to the centre of God. Your duty well done will result in the self-realisation of your soul.

"I was a cobbler," said Garfield, "but I cobbled the shoes well." Let each one play his own part well, no matter if that part be great or small.

*Arjuna said :—*

36. Dragged on by what does a man commit sin, even against his will, O Krishna, as it were by force constrained?

Arjuna asks the question :—"What is it that makes a man do evil, even against his own will, under compulsion, as it were?"

A man does not desire sin, yet commits it. Why? Is man helpless? Who is the real foe of man? Can the foe be vanquished?

In answer, Sri Krishna points out that man is not a machine, an automation. My *dharma* or duty is pre-ordained by my *karmas* in previous births. Am I to be a teacher or a merchant, a fighter or a public servant, a preacher or an humble servant of the poor? My duty is ordained, I have but to discover it.



But virtue or sin, purity or impurity,—this is not pre-ordained. It is for one to make the wrong or right *sankalpa* and so choose purity or sin. In this matter, I am free.

My *vasanas*, it is true, give me the initial tendencies to choice : these *vasanas* are due to previous *karmas*. These *vasanas* awaken attraction or aversion. But I have, also, *sankalpa*, will-power,—the power of determination. By *sankalpa*, I should overcome attraction, however powerful, and aversion, however strong. If I do not, I fall : and I must suffer.

Arjuna uses the word, *anicchannapi*, which means, "even against his will." Arjuna feels that man commits sin even against his will. It is not really so. Man gives his consent before he commits sin. Sri Krishna says :—What we speak of as *prakriti*, or the nature of a person, draws him to his course only through attachment and aversion (*raga dvesha*) : and by *sankalpa*, by disciplined will, we can conquer attachment and aversion.

*The Blessed Lord said :—*

37. It is craving (*kama*), it is wrath (*krodha*), born of *rajoguna* (the mode of passion), all devouring and all polluting. Know thou this to be our enemy here (on earth).

Arjuna! the enemies of man are two :—(1) *kama*, lust; and (2) *krodha*, wrath. They are the two faces of *rajoguna* : both are ravenous, both are deadly. Beware of them!

We must not dwell in thought upon an undesirable object. If we dwell upon it in thought, we are likely to experience some pleasure which will awaken desire (*trishna*) : then will grow the craving to embrace it, to possess it,—and then we fall.

This is transformed into *krodha* (anger), when the desire to possess or enjoy the object is obstructed. In the *Mahabharata*, *kama* is compared to a tree of which all other passions are parts, and the *jiva* is tied to *kama* by iron chains.

The best way to guard against the attack of *kama* is to do our duty, come what may. So develop your will.

38. As a flame is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo is wrapped by the womb,—so is this covered by that.

*Smoke* hides fire, *dust* hides a mirror, the *womb* hides the embryo, so doth lust hide the Light of the Atman.



39. Enveloped is wisdom, O Arjuna, by this insatiable fire of desire,—the constant foe of the wise.

Lust or *kama*, in its hungry flames, is the foe even of the wise man, for it hides the Light of the Atman.

Pregnant with meaning are the words of Manu :—"Desire is never satisfied by the enjoyments of the objects of desire. It grows, from more to more, as does the fire to which fuel is added."

40. The senses, the mind and the intelligence (*buddhi*) are said to be its seat. Veiling wisdom by these, it deludes the dweller in the body (the embodied soul).

What does *kama* do? (1) *Kama* goes through the outer gates of the senses. (2) It captures the fort of the mind. And, at last, (3) it captures the citadel of the *buddhi*, the region of determination and will. Therefore, if you are wise, you must watch the gates. Each sensation of pleasure should be to you a warning. Watchman! let not the enemy in!

When *kama* leads the senses, the mind and the reason, the man goes swiftly down the path of decline. Goethe was a great man : but when *kama* darkened his senses, he ran after girls in restlessness. Nelson had a great mind, but when *kama* swayed it, Nelson lived with the wife of another man. Shelley was a man of *buddhi* (reason, intuition) : but it, too, was darkened by *kama* and Shelley, leaving his wife, married another woman, and the first wife committed suicide!

41. Therefore, O Arjuna, control thy senses at the outset and slay this sinful destroyer of *gnana* and *vignana*.

*Gnana* and *vignana* have been interpreted, in different ways, by different teachers. One thing is clear. Sri Krishna urges, that the mind and *buddhi* will not be purified until, first, the senses are under control. *Brahmacharya* was, therefore, rightly held, in ancient India, to be the basis of right education. You will not succeed in purifying the mind and awakening pure *buddhi*,—intuition,—and pure will, until first you have purified the senses. Control the senses, the flesh, and you will purify your mind and build up pure, resisting will-power.

42. The senses, they say, are great. Greater than the senses is the mind. Greater than the mind is the



*buddhi* (understanding or rational will). But what is greater than the *buddhi* is He (the Atman, the Self).

What is the way out of sin? Surrender the lower to the higher! Give up, to go forward!

Be not guided by the likes and dislikes of the senses. Act from a sense of duty alone. Rise to higher and ever-higher levels of consciousness,—from the senses to the mind (reflection), from the mind to the *buddhi*, from the *buddhi* to the Atman. And at each stage of the ascent, you will be freer than before, until you reach the Supreme and, no longer acting from lower nature nor as a bondsman to *prakriti*, your desire is dead in the unity of the Atman.

43. Thus knowing Him (the Self) as greater than the *buddhi*, steadying the (lower) self by the Self, slay, O Arjuna, the enemy in the form of desire, so difficult to overcome.

This arch-enemy, desire (*kama*), must not be merely beaten : he may return and give trouble. The enemy must be destroyed.

Surrender everything to Him and act in a spirit of non-attachment. Act! for without action life will fail.

The cosmic wheel moves on! The chief enemy in the path is *kama* or desire. The favourite seats of *kama* are the senses, the mind and the *buddhi*. Dislodge *kama* from the seats by purifying the senses and controlling the mind. And seek the aid of the Atman, God, to slay the arch-enemy, desire. So slaying, be free!

Thus in the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this be the third chapter, entitled :

*Karma Yoga*  
Or The Yoga of Action.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE SECRET DOCTRINE

*The Blessed Lord said :—*

1. This imperishable yoga I declared to Vivasvan ; Vivasvan told it to Manu ; Manu spoke it to Ikshvaku.
2. Thus, handed on down the line, the royal sages knew it till, through long lapse of time, the yoga was lost to the world, O Arjuna !

Sri Krishna implies that He is the first teacher of wisdom the *adiguru*. The teaching can be given only to *adhikaris*, those fit for initiation. The first *adhikari* was Vivasvan, the Sun God, the Lord of Light. He passed it on to Manu, the founder of the Aryan social and moral order, the ancestor of the Aryan race. Manu gave it to his son, Ikshvaku, the ancient Indian king and hero.

The doctrine is ancient, revealed to *adhikaris*, from age to age. The royal sages, the philosopher kings of ancient India, carried this yoga onward till, by faithlessness in the cycle of time, the secret was lost.

3. This same ancient yoga hath been today revealed to thee by Me, for thou art My devotee and My friend. It is the supreme Secret.

Krishna declares the ancient yoga (*yogah puratanah*) to Arjuna, because Arjuna is an *adhiakar*. (1) He is Krishna's *bhakta* (devotee). A *bhakta* is one who lives in the Master's aura and so has no separate life. (2) He is the Master's *sakha*, friend. And (3) he grows gradually to be the Master's son.

*Arjuna said :—*

4. Later was Thy birth, but earlier was the birth



of Vivasvan. How, then, am I to understand that thou didst declare the yoga at the beginning (of creation) ?

Arjuna is confounded. Krishna belongs to my day, Arjuna thinks. We have played and dined and walked together : but the Sun-God, Vivasvan, took birth millions of years ago. How could Krishna teach the Sun-God in that remote period ? It was the beginning of the creation of the solar system.

In answer to Arjuna, Sri Krishna makes the supreme declaration of the doctrine of incarnation (*avatarvad*).

*The Blessed Lord Said :—*

5. Many births have been left behind by Me and by thee, O Arjuna ! I know them all, but thou knowest not thine.

The birth of the Lord is not like human birth, dependent, but self-revealed and independent.

The *jiva* is limited by the three *gunas* and so cannot remember the past births. The body of the *jiva* is due to *karma*. The Lord is independent of the three *gunas*. To Him the past, the present and the future are one infinite present. And the birth of the Lord is due to His mercy on mankind, not to any *karma*.

6. Though I am unborn and My Self is imperishable, and though I am the Lord of all beings, yet establishing Myself in My own nature, I am born through My own Power.

Birthless is Sri Krishna and deathless and Lord of all that breathes. He is the Master of *prakriti*. He controls *maya* and assumes forms through His own free will, through His own power (*atmamayaya*). The Lord, who is perfect, assumes imperfection. The *jiva's* birth is due to *karmic* compulsion : but Krishna's birth is due to His compassion on suffering humanity.

In the *Bhagavata*, we read that Krishna's birth as son to a human father and mother is like the birth of the full moon in the eastern sky,—an occasion and not an effect.

7. Whenever there is decay of *dharma* (righteousness), O Arjuna, and there is exaltation of *adharma* (unrighteousness), then I project Myself.

Whenever *dharma* is trampled upon and torn by *adharma*



the Lord cometh in human form, out of His grace, taking compassion upon suffering humanity. He cometh to establish *dharma* by precept and practice, by the power of His teaching and the light of His life. He cometh when the cosmic forces of disharmony rise high and there is terrible unrest in the hearts of men, when civilisation is being tossed, to and fro, in wars and revolutions, in anarchy and chaos, like a cork upon a sea of suffering.

In this *sloka*, Sri Krishna enunciates the doctrine of *avatara*. "I project Myself," that is "I descend as *avatara*." *Avatara* means, literally, "one who has descended." The Divine descends to the earthly plane to raise it to a higher status, a higher grade of life.

The Lord descends as *avatara* when *dharma* declines. *Dharma* means mode of behaviour, conduct. When men do not act in the right way, when their conduct is not in conformity with the divine law of life, the Lord cometh to re-start humanity on the right path. He does not stand aside when the world is disturbed by disequilibrium. He is Love : He is Mercy. And, in infinite grace, He cometh to help humanity and save it from moral extinction, again and again. He does not stand remote from the struggles and conflicts of men. He is not unconcerned with humanity's struggle against *adharma*. He cometh to help and heal, to guide the world wheel, to save sinking humanity.

8. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, for the sake of establishing righteousness, I come into birth form age to age.

*For the destruction of the wicked* : let us not forget that when the Lord punishes the wicked, it is for their good. He punishes in love and grace. He punishes them here so that they may improve and evolve after death. The Lord's punishment is, really, the Lord's grace.

*I come into birth from age to age* : Sri Krishna comes, again and again. The *Sanatana Dharma* of the Aryans does not, like the Christian Faith, hold that there is an exclusive revelation of God. God appeareth, from age to age, to raise man to the spiritual level of life.

9. He who knoweth thus, in its true nature, My divine birth and works, cometh not to birth again, when he leaves his body; but he cometh unto Me, O Arjuna!

10. Freed from passion, fear and anger, filled with



Me, taking refuge in Me, purified by *gnana tapasa* (austerity of wisdom), many have attained to My state of being.

The *avatara* comes to call and draw men to the divine life. Whoever enters into communion with the divine life "cometh not to birth again."

He is liberated, set free from the flesh. He is freed from "passion, fear and anger" : he is purified in the "fire of wisdom." Such a man, when quitting his mortal frame, enters no more the wheel of birth and death. He is Krishna-filled : he enters into the divine life, the divine being of Krishna (*madbhavamagatah*).

Krishna is born not only in a human form on the earth-plane. He is born, too, in the dark night of the soul, in the hearts of His dear ones who are purified by knowledge. From passion, fear and anger freed, and filled with the wisdom which purifies, they pass along the "ancient narrow path," and enter into the being of the Lord. So does the *avatara* descend into humanity to help men to ascend into Godhead. And many have, through the discipline of *gnana*, been perfected and become living images of the Lord on earth.

11. However men approach Me, even so do I greet them, for the path men take from every side is Mine, O Arjuna!

At the end of each path standeth Sri Krishna. All ways are His ways. All men everywhere walk unto Him!

His Path, indeed, is the One Path : there is no other. He is the One Bridge that spans the sea of sorrow, the Bridge of Light. The Bridge has diverse colours, and each is called by a different name. The Bridge has different sections or stages. Knowledge, *bhakti*, *karma*, are some of the names used by men to indicate what helps them to cross : but the path for all is still His Path. For one is the Ladder of the souls,—the Ladder whose "summit is lost in the glorious light of *Nirvana*." It is the Ladder of Krishna as, indeed, the Path is really the Path of the knowledge of Krishna, the knowledge of the Atman.

"The path men take from every side is Mine!" All worship is sacred. They who worship the gods, also, come to the God of gods. All worship is sacred, for Truth is veiled in symbols. And all symbols express the One Inexpressible Reality. All manifestations are His. "All temples are Thine!" sang Guru Nanak. "The Teacher and Inspirer art Thou of all!" And the Sindhi poet, Sachal, said :—"O God! in every temple I



see the worshippers that seek Thee.....Islam and the Hindu Faith do both feel after Thee. Each declares :—"Thou art One! And Thou hast no equal!" Udayanacharya writes :—"Whom the Shaivas worship as Shiva, the Vedantins as Brahman, the Buddhists as Buddha, the Naiyyayikas who specialise in canons of knowledge as the chief agent, the followers of the Jaina code as the Ever-free, the ritualists as the Principle of Law,—may that Hari, the Lord of the three worlds, grant our prayers!"

12. They who desire success in action on earth offer sacrifices to the gods. (Such men have their reward), for quickly, indeed, does action bear its fruit in this world of men.

All do not come to the Lord. For many desire quick results in their worldly undertakings. Such men worship the gods and quickly gain material success. Such men do not rise to the heights of *nishkama karma* : they are not inclined to *nishkama bhakti*. Yet they, too, tread the Krishna Path, for their worship will, at long last, generate *nishkama karma* and *bhakti* and lead to the attainment of the Supreme.

Worship of the gods is not repudiated by the Lord : for all the gods are His.

13. The four-fold order (*chaturvarnyam*) was created by Me, according to the divisions of *guna* and *karma* (aptitude and work). Though I am the Author of the four-fold order, know Me to be actionless and changeless.

The four *varnas* are four types of life, four modes of living,—each being the product of a man's thoughts and action. One man's thoughts and actions manifest themselves in the form of a teacher (*brahmin*), another's in the form of a warrior (*kshatrya*), another's in the form of a merchant (*vaishya*), another's in the form of an humble servant (*sudra*). But in each dwells the One God. It is open to a *jiva* to become, according to his *gunas* (qualities), a *brahmin*, a *kshatrya*, a *vaishya*, or a *sudra*.

The *varnas* are not castes, not rigid divisions, but social types, due to differences in *gunas* (qualities). The Marxian conception of "classless society" is not Sri Krishna's conception. Society cannot be "classless" : nor must society be a rigid caste-cribbed convention. The social life-force expresses itself as four types according to *gunas*, qualities and actions.



The four orders (*varnas*) are four functional groupings. They are independent of sex or birth. The *varna* is determined by *guna* (temperament or aptitude) and *karma* (action or vocation).

Though the Lord is the Author of the four-fold order, He is *akartaram*, actionless. For He is unattached. He acts without attachment and so is not in bondage.

14. Actions stain Me not : nor do I desire the fruit of action. He who knoweth Me thus is not bound by *karma* (action).

Krishna explains this paradox : how, being actionless, He becomes the Author of actions and qualities.

The Lord's actions are not due to desire but grace and compassion on mankind. His actions are unfettered, free, and result not in bonds of birth and death. He who realises the Lord thus is himself freed from the fetters of birth : for, in him, desire ceases to drive, and the false egoistic sense of "agency" ceases to be. The Lord's *karma* is His *leela* not an expression of desire and passion.

The Lord, it is true, is the unseen background of every action, but He is not entangled in the movement of objects.

15. Knowing thus, was action done by men of old who sought liberation. Therefore, do thou, also, act as they did in the olden time.

16. What is action? And what is inaction (*akarma*) ? Even the wise are herein bewildered. Therefore, I will declare to thee what action is, knowing which thou shalt be delivered from evil.

17. One should know what action is and what is wrong action (*vikarma*) and what is non-action (*akarma*). Hard to understand is the way of work.

These three must be rightly known : what kind of work to do, what kind of work to avoid, and how to reach a state of rest, calm detachment from work (inaction, *akarma*).

18. He who seeth inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is wise (*buddhiman*) among men. He is harmonious (*yuktah*), even while performing all actions.

He who is in repose in the midst of activity and who is active in the midst of repose, he is wise, indeed. When



engaged in action, he remains poised in the tranquillity of the Atman. For, while engaged in action, he is unsolicitous of results, and so, while in action, he really is "doing nothing." Every act of his is an offering to God. His action becomes a *yagna* : he is ever engaged in works of sacrifice (*yagna*).

When a train or ship moves, the trees on the land seem to move : the movement of the trees is an illusion. So when we do work, let us say to ourselves :—"This doing is only seeming : we are not doing."

In action let us see inaction. So in inaction (*akarma*) let us see action. True *akarma* is not idleness: true *akarma* is not denying a poor man shelter and protection. That is *vikarma*, wrong action. True *akarma* is harmony, tranquillity, restfulness, in daily life. True *akarma* is action done in a spirit of self-surrender, with *chitta-shanti*. Then doth action fall off as falls a ripened fruit.

Janaka and Suka are two of the great examples of men of action who in action saw inaction and in inaction saw action,—yogis of action and sages of silence. True inaction is detachment, freedom from desire and egotism. It is inner renunciation.

19. Whose works are all free from the moulding of desire (*kama sankalpa*), whose actions are burnt clean in the fire of wisdom (*gnana-agni*),—him the wise have called a pandit (a man of true learning, a sage).

*Sankalpa* is egoism : it is the cause of *kama* or desire.

The pandit (the man of true learning) works with a view to helping the world's evolution (*lokasangraha*) or the bare maintenance of his body.

*Gnana-agni* is the fire of knowledge. Which knowledge? The knowledge that all actions take place within the calm and passionless light of the Atman. The fire of this knowledge purifies all actions and slays all desire for selfish fruits.

Such a pandit is truly wise, for he sees inaction in action. His body and mind are engaged in action, yet he does nothing. He clings to naught.

20. Having abandoned attachment to the fruit of action, ever content, without dependence, he does nothing, though ever engaged in work.

21. Expecting nothing, his heart and self under control, abandoning all greed, doing action by the



body alone,—he committeth no sin.

22. Content with whatever comes by chance, free from the pairs of opposites (*dvandas*), without jealousy, balanced in success and failure,—even when he acts, he is not bound.

What chance (God's will) gives, he takes and is content. Does pain follow pleasure? He is not troubled. Does gain follow loss? He is indifferent. He is jealous of none. He acts, yet is not bound by action. His actions are transmuted into the gold of bliss. They no longer bind as iron.

23. Of him whose attachments are dead, who is liberated (*mukta*), whose mind is firmly established in wisdom, who does work as a sacrifice,—of such a man all action melts away.

The Lord teaches the secret of making actions the means of liberation, *mukti*. Make your work a sacrificial offering to God.

Do not reject action: What binds is not *karma*, action. What binds is our "egotism," our foolish notion that we are "separate individuals," isolated, self-centred. What binds is selfishness. Act, but in the knowledge that manifestation is of the Eternal. Act, but make your action a *yagna*, a sacrifice, and you are no longer bound. You are liberated, You are free!

24. For him the act of offering is God. The thing offered (the oblation), too, is God. By God is it offered into the Fire of God. Unto God, verily, goeth he who realises God in his works.

A profound thought this : God is the ritual and God is the offering. God is he who offers to the Fire that is God. If, indeed, a man sees God in every object, in every action, he findeth God.

This verse is chanted by Hindus as a grace before meals.

He who works for the welfare of the world (*lokasangraha*), let him see God in everything. The action, the actor, and the act are all manifestations of the Eternal.

25. Some yogins offer sacrifices to the gods, while others offer the sacrifice of their "self" into the Fire of the Supreme.

Some do the consecrated rites of action in worship of the



gods, in expectation of favours from them.

Others make of their "ego" the offering and pour it into the sacrificial Fire of the Eternal Brahman. They offer all works to the Divine Self.

26. Some pour as sacrifice hearing and the other senses into the (sacrificial) fire of restraint. Others offer sound and the other objects of sense into the fires of the senses.

Some withdraw hearing (ears) and other senses from contact with sense-objects : the senses are thus the offering poured into the sacrificial fire of self-discipline. Some practise restraint of sound and other objects of sense,—restraint of hearing, etc.,—as a prelude to the stage in which these controlled senses are used for the service of the Atman who is in all.

27. Some again pour as sacrifice all actions of their senses and all functions of the vital force (*prana*) into the fire of the yoga of self-control, kindled by knowledge (gnana).

28. Yet others offer as sacrifice their material possessions or their penance or the austerity of yoga, while others of restrained minds and rigid vows offer their learning and knowledge as sacrifice.

29. Others again, who are devoted to breath-control (pranayama), restrain the paths of *prana* (the outgoing breath) and *apana* (the incoming breath) and pour as sacrifice *prana* into *apana* and *apana* into *prana*.

30. Others again restrict their food and pour their life-breaths (*prana*) as sacrifice into life-breaths. All these know what sacrifice is, and by sacrifice they destroy their sins.

31. Those who eat the sacred food that remains after the sacrifice attain to the Eternal Brahman (God). This world is not for him who offereth no sacrifice, much less the other world, O Arjuna!

32. Thus many kinds of sacrifice are spread out



before the Eternal (i. e., they are the means of reaching God). Know thou that all these are born of action. Knowing this thou shalt be free.

33. Better than any material sacrifice is *gnana yagna*, the sacrifice of wisdom, O Arjuna! For all actions, without any exception, culminate in *gnana* or wisdom.

Sri Krishna has mentioned some of the various kinds of sacrifice, *yagna*. These different *yagnas* arise out of the fact that all men are not, in actual life, in the same stage of evolution. Men, according to *gunas* and *prakriti*, belong to different *varnas* and offer different sacrifices.

Some offer the "sacrifice of the senses" : they control by *tapasya* their hearing, etc.

Some offer the sacrifice of "the actions of the senses and the functions of the vital force (*prana*)" : these are the sacrifices of sense-delights.

Some offer the sacrifice of wealth, some of mortification (*tapas*), some of yoga, some of *swadhyaya* (silent reading), some of *pranayama* (breath-control), some of *ahara* (food), fasting.

All these sacrifices (*yagnas*), when done in sincerity, help the seeker on the Path : they are a step towards liberation.

And all these sacrifices are born of action (*karma*) and are "spread out before the Eternal." Whoever, then, does his work honestly, trusting in God, and is not worried about reward or results, is doing "sacrificial work" : for his work is consecrated to the Supreme.

But the sacrifice of wisdom (*gnana-yagna*) i. e., knowledge consecrated to the Supreme, is superior to "sacrifice of any objects," or material things.

Yet the value of the "sacrifices of objects" must not be under-estimated. For such sacrifices purify the doer and gradually open up his centre of illumination and so become a means of liberation.

Why is *gnana* superior to *karma*? *Karma* leads to fruits, but wisdom reveals, is revelatory.

In *gnana* (wisdom) is the salvation of all. The wise ones are the calm great ones who have crossed over the ocean yet who renounce even their *gnana*,—keep it not for themselves but spend it freely, wholly, unreservedly, unselfishly to helping others to cross the ocean. This is their *gnana-yagna*, the great sacrifice of knowledge.



34. Learn wisdom thou by humble reverence, by inquiry (investigation) and by service. The wise,—the seers of Truth,—will instruct thee in wisdom.

Wisdom will be awakened in you by the wise. They are the *gnanis*, *tatva darshanah*, the seers of *tatva* (essence of life).

Three things are essential to him who would have wisdom, :—

(1) Humility (*pranipata*). To a disciple is taught wisdom, and he should have humility.

(2) Investigation (*pariprashna*). He must seek wisdom by diligent search.

(3) Service (*seva*). He must serve his Guru.

Wisdom will be kindled in you if a Guru, an illuminated soul, a man of realisation, will bless you and pass on to you,—as the flame does its spark,—the knowledge of Brahman, The Sat Guru,—the true Teacher,—is in the Heart already. There He speaketh but we hear not His still, small voice, for we are used to listening to trumpet tunes. Intuition is in us, but we do not always distinguish it from desire, and so we need an external Guru, whom we can better and more easily understand.

The Guru comes at the right time. Not by restless wandering is the Guru found. Let but the pupil be ready and the Guru appears. And let the pupil give the Guru the one true obedience, the obedience of self-effacement, and the will which surrenders itself to the teacher and is blended with his, so that the wisdom-light which shineth in the Guru shineth, also, in the disciple.

35. And having known this wisdom (*gnana*), thou, O Arjuna, shalt not fall again into this confusion. For, by this wisdom, thou wilt see all beings, without exception, in the Atman (the Self), and thus in Me!

This wisdom is spiritual knowledge. It reveals the fact of unity. Of cosmical significance is this fact. You see the unity of all creatures in the Atman, the Self, the Spirit, and so in Krishna. This is the stage of Self-realisation and God-realisation.

This wisdom is seeing, is light. You no longer merely believe or feel or understand, but you *see* that all beings, the whole cosmos, the created universe, is within one Light, the Light of the one Atman. Science tells us that all things exist and move within space. The seer sees that all things are and move within the one wisdom-light.

36. Even if thou art the most sinful of all sinners,



thou shalt cross over all sin by the raft of wisdom alone.

Sri Krishna sounds here a note which gives us all hope and strength, for we all have erred and gone astray. Even if you were the most sinful of all sinners, says the Lord, this knowledge (*gnana*) will carry you like a boat of light over all your sins!

All bondage is sin. Not only bondage of *adharma* (un-righteousness) but, also, the bondage of *dharma*, of self-righteousness, of conscious virtue, of *ahankara* which says:—"I am virtuous! I am good! I am pure!"

37. As the burning fire turns its fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so doth the fire of wisdom turn to ashes all action.

*Gnana*, wisdom, burns up all *sanchita* (accumulated) and *agami* (future) *karmas*. Only the *prarabdha* (the *karmic* sum total which has begun to bear fruit) must be worked out.

38. Verily, there is no purifier in this world like wisdom. He, who is perfected in yoga, finds this wisdom in himself,—his Self, in course of time.

39. He who has faith and is absorbed in wisdom and hath mastery over his senses,—he gains wisdom. And, having gained wisdom, he goeth swiftly to the Supreme Peace.

The essential thing is faith. Faith is *shraddha*, not blind belief in a creed or sectarian *shariat*, but firm aspiration to gain wisdom.

And in addition to faith, you must have mastery over your senses. Master your senses: let them not carry you away. Let the sails of aspiration bear you swiftly to the Deathless.

40. But he who is ignorant, who has no faith, who is of a doubting nature, goeth to destruction. For the doubting self, there is neither this world, nor that beyond, nor happiness.

Doubt blots out the guiding stars. Doubt fills the soul with despair. Doubt obscures the light which guides.

41. He who hath renounced action by yoga (i.e., by forsaking all reward), who hath by wisdom cut



the bonds of doubt, who ever possesses the Atman (is ruled by the Atman, the Self),—actions do not bind him, O Arjuna!

He who, through practice of *karma-yoga*, acts without desire, who tears his doubts to shreds through knowledge of the Atman (*gnana-yoga*), who in all his work is poised in the Atman,—no bonds can bind him.

You renounce *karma* by making it a love-offering to God.

You possess your Atman when you attain to self-realisation. There is nothing higher.

42. Therefore, cleave asunder with the sword of wisdom this doubt in thy heart, born of ignorance, be established in yoga, and stand up, O Arjuna!

The man of wisdom is a free man. No actions bind him. For, while performing action, he hath renounced action. Such a man hath cut asunder all doubt by knowledge. Arjuna! cut asunder with the sword of wisdom (*gnana*) the doubt which dwells in thy heart. It is a doubt born of ignorance (*agnana*).

The clarion call to Arjuna is :—Arise, and march, O soldier of God, under divine command. Arise, and take up thy duty in the spirit of a *karma-yogi*. It is your duty (*dharma*) to fight!

Thus in the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this be the fourth chapter, entitled :

### *Gnana Yoga*

Or The Yoga of Divine Knowledge or Wisdom.



## CHAPTER V

### THE PATH OF RENUNCIATION

*Arjuna said :—*

1. Renunciation of action (*karma sanyasa*) Thou praisest, O Krishna, and also the right performance of action (*karma yoga*). Of the two which one is the better? That tell me for certain.

Arjuna has a doubt again. And he frankly puts it before the Master.

Krishna has spoken of sankhya and yoga of *gnana* and *karma*, of knowledge and work. And between the two Arjuna sees an insuperable contradiction. For the sankhya doctrine of knowledge advocates renunciation of action, and the yoga doctrine advocates right performance of action. Yet Krishna says that both are good, that both the paths (*gnana* and *karma*) lead man to the highest state.

Arjuna is not satisfied. He wants definite guidance as to what he should do. Should Arjuna renounce his *karma* as a warrior and follow the line of *sanyasa* (as taught by sankhya)? Or should he do his *karma* as a *kshatrya* and carry the fight to a finish (as taught by yoga)? Which of the two,—renunciation and work,—should Arjuna follow?

Surely, the belief among many Hindus was that through *sanyasa* could one attain to liberation. If so, Arjuna's *kshatrya*-work should stand in the way of his liberation. In which case, Arjuna is prepared to give up his work as a *kshatrya*, and practise renunciation as a *sanyasin*. Arjuna wants to know definitely what he should do.

*The Blessed Lord said :—*

2. *Sanyasa* (renunciation of action) and *karma-yoga* (unselfish performance of action) both lead to



supreme bliss. Of the two, *karma-yoga* is, verily, better than *sanyasa*.

*Karma-yoga* and *sanyasa* are not contraries leading to different goals. But for Arjuna, *karma-yoga* is easier and, therefore, better than *sanyasa*.

A true *karma-yogi* is always a *sanyasi*, for he renounces actions mentally, though he is engaged in action outwardly. And the *karma-yogi* is freed from bondage of birth and death easily, and he attains God quickly.

The *gnana-marga* (the path of knowledge) is a rugged one for him who has not gone through the discipline of *karma-yoga*. Therefore, be a *karma-yogi*, O Arjuna!

3. Who neither hateth nor desireth should be known as a perpetual *sanyasi*. For, free from *dvandas* (pairs of opposites), he is easily set free from bondage, O Arjuna!

*Dvandvas*: pairs of opposites. They are pleasure and pain, heat and cold, etc. The *dvandas*,—attraction and repulsion, desire and aversion,—are the great enemies of man. The *karma-yogi* subdues them both and acts for the sake of God and so is freed from the bondage of *karma*.

The perpetual *sanyasi* (*nitya sanyasi*) is he who neither longs for a thing nor is averse to its opposite. He lacks both aversion and desire, both lust and hatred. Such an one soon shakes his bondage, the chains of his delusion. He is like Socrates, living in the world yet detached from the world.

4. Children, not the wise, speak of sankhya (renunciation) and yoga (of action) as different. He who is established in one gets the fruits of both.

5. The supreme state which is gained by sankhyas (men of renunciation) is, also, reached by the yogis (men of unselfish action). Who sees that the sankhya and the yoga are one sees with clear eyes.

Knowledge and action are one. They see truly who realise that the twain are one. Take either path and tread it to the end : the end is the same. The followers of action meet the seekers of knowledge in equal freedom.

6. But without yoga, O Arjuna, renunciation is difficult to attain. The sage, trained in yoga (the way



of works), swiftly attains to Brahman, the Eternal.

True sanyasa (renunciation) is not reached by a sudden wrench of the will, but by progressive surrender of the self or ego at the Feet of God. It is the ego, the personal self, which is the seat of desire, attachment (*moha*). This personal self is an ever-changing flux of experience : it is a "whirlpool" and must go ! It must be totally eliminated, annihilated.

Without *karma-yoga*, Sri Krishna teaches, it is difficult to walk the way of *sanyasa* or *gnana-marga*. There is the danger lest you fall, for the path of *sanyasa* (renunciation) bristles with difficulties. *Karma-yoga* disciplines you, purifies you. Without such discipline and self-purification, your renunciation may prove premature : your knowledge may fail in the hour of trial and testing and be no more than mere intellectual belief.

A man may think he has attained to knowledge and, renouncing action, take to *sanyasa*, and he may hold that the whole world is *maya*; but if, through *karma-yoga*, he has not purified his heart, he may, any day, find that this *maya* proves too strong for him. Anger and *kama* (lust) may wake up within him, and he may fall a victim to *raga* or *dvesha*, attraction or repulsion. If he has not mastered his senses, attachment or *bhoga* impulses may arise, and then the sense of "I," the ego, may assail him and he may fall an easy prey to the lure of vicious enjoyments and *ahankara*.

The mind and the senses must be purged of likes and dislikes, must be cured of all impurities and longing for enjoyment, before the man is prepared to tread the path of knowledge or wisdom. This can only be done through training in *karma-yoga*, through the discipline of action, of unselfish deeds of *seva*, through sacrifice, self-oblation to suffering humanity.

7. He who is devoted to the path of action and is pure in soul, who is master of his self and has conquered the senses, who realises his Self as the Self in all beings,—though acting, he is not touched by taint of action.

Why is he not affected by action ? Because he acts not for himself. The Atman, the higher Self,—the Krishna within him,—is the performer of his actions.

He sees, he hears, he touches, he smells, he eats, he moves, he sleeps, he breathes, he speaks ; but he understands that this is so because motions of the senses and organs are directed by natural impulse to their appropriate objects. He knows the divine truth that he is doing nothing.



8. The man who is united with the Divine, the knower of Truth, thinks, "I do nothing at all." For in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing,

9. In speaking, giving, seizing, opening and closing the eyes, he holds that only the senses move among the objects of the senses.

10. He who acteth, abandoning attachment, surrendering all actions to God, is untouched by sin, even as a lotus leaf (is untouched) by water.

In *sloka* 8 and 9 is described the *sadhana*, the discipline of him who follows *gnana-yoga*. He never regards himself as the "doer of actions."

*Sloka* 10 refers to *karma-yoga*. The *karma-yogi* acts, but is detached in all his acts. He works but hath no desire for fruit or reward. He lives in the world but is unstained. He does not renounce works, but offers them to the Supreme. He renounces not work, but attachment to the "ego," the finite self, attachment to likes and dislikes. These lead to bondage.

11. The yogis, abandoning attachment, perform action only by the body, by the mind, by the *buddhi* (understanding), or only by the senses, for the purification of their souls.

The true *karma-yogi* regards the body, the mind, the *buddhi*, and the sense-organs, not as himself, but as instruments only. He knows himself to be other than the instruments. And thus his heart grows pure in the knowledge that he is not the body, nor the mind, nor the *buddhi*, nor the senses, but the Atman, the Spirit.

The *karma-yogi*, regarding the body, mind, *buddhi* and senses as merely instruments, uses them, eliminating all sense of pleasure and possession, and filled with the sense of surrender of all fruits to God. Thus purified, he can serve selflessly and, abandoning all attachment, offereth joyfully all to God.

12. The man who is united with the Divine, abandoneth attachment to the fruits of action and attaineth to eternal peace. But he whose soul is not in union with the divine, is impelled by desire and is



attached to the fruit of action and is (therefore) bound.

United with God, cut free from the fruits of action, man finds peace. Without God, he is dragged by desire and is imprisoned, enslaved by action.

13. Mentally renouncing all actions, the embodied soul (*dehi*) resteth serenely in the nine-gated city, neither doing nor directing action.

Happy, indeed, is the dweller in the city of nine gates (the human body), whose discrimination has enabled him to be detached in the midst of all his work. He is not involved in action : he does not involve others. He is detached, desireless,—a true *karma-yogi*.

The nine-gated city is the body which has nine openings :—the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, and the mouth, and the two organs of excretion and reproduction.

14. The Lord of the world (*Prabhu*) does not create in the case of people the idea of agency, nor does He act. Nor does He connect works with their fruits. All this is done by *svabhava* (nature).

*Prabhu* is the Real Self of all that is. This Self is the Light. It dwells in the body, neither acting nor causing to act. This Light is unaffected by deeds of men, is untouched by good or evil acts. In this Light, the *jignasu* takes refuge against all the forces that would resist his onward march. In this Light he aspires to abide, yet in no selfish isolation, for to him hath come the knowledge that life is meant to be an offering to the Lord for His service and the well-being of His creatures.

15. The Lord takes not on Himself the good or evil of any. Wisdom is enveloped by ignorance : so are creatures bewildered.

The Lord (*Vibhuh*) is everywhere and ever perfect. He is not affected by men's sin, nor their righteousness. He dwells beyond good and evil. He is the Atman, the Light. But the Light is covered by the darkness of *agnana*, *vasana*, delusion : and so we are bewildered.

Under the influence of the delusion of separateness, the *jivas* think they are the doers of actions. When this delusion goes, the *jignasu* passes through the inner door of the heart and enters a sphere where wisdom shines, the wisdom of the One Atman. There the *jignasu* feels he is one with the All,



and to him is revealed the Supreme, the Nameless Eternal, "Tat," "That," unaffected by good or evil deeds of men.

16. Verily in whom ignorance is destroyed by the wisdom of the Atman, in them wisdom, like the sun, reveals the Supreme.

Blessed are they who attain to wisdom, knowledge of the Atman, the true Self, Krishna within. They are the yogis. As the light of the sun disperses darkness and reveals the beauty of the world, so does the light of wisdom (*gnana*) disperse all ignorance and reveal the Supreme to the true yogi.

17. They whose *buddhi* and mind are wholly merged in That, who remain rooted in the Supreme, and have finally become one with Him,—they go whence there is no return, their sins dispelled by wisdom.

Such true yogis,—men of true *sanyasa*, sons of the Light, sages of illumination,—live and move in the Supreme. They think on That, and are devoted to That. And when they leave this mortal body, they go to the Abode whence there is no return to this wheel of birth and death.

18. Sages look with an equal eye on a Brahmin, adorned with learning and humility, or a cow, or an elephant, and even on a dog and a pariah (outcaste).

Such sages are free from all preferences, prejudices and predilections. They are *samadarshi*.: they see the One Self (Atman) in a cow, an elephant and a dog,—the One Krishna in a selfless Brahmin and an outcaste who eats the flesh of dogs. Such sages have equal or balanced consciousness. And they rest in the Eternal (Brahman) who is the *samam* (balanced).

19. Even here (on earth) is the world overcome by those whose mind is established in unity, in equality. God is *nirdosha*, untouched by evil, and He is the same in all. The knowers are established in God.

20. With *buddhi* firm and unbewildered, abiding in God, the knower of Brahman neither rejoiceth on obtaining what is pleasant nor sorroweth on obtaining what is painful.



21. Unattached to external contacts and finding joy in the Atman (the Self), the *yoga-yukta*, who is in union with God, enjoyeth bliss imperishable.

22. The pleasures that are born of contacts (with objects) are, verily, wombs of pain. They have their beginnings and their endings, O Arjuna! Not in them may rejoice the wise.

Such yogis rejoice not over pleasant things (*priyam*) nor grieve over the unpleasant (*apriyam*). All their joy is in the Self, the Atman, in the divine union with the Krishna within. Not in the delights arising from the attraction of the senses or contact with external objects, not in these ephemeral and impermanent enjoyments is their joy. They know that the pleasures of the senses are brief and end in pain. The bliss of God-realisation is eternal.

All pleasures have a beginning and an ending (*adi-anta*). And they are wombs of pain (*dukha yonaya*),—the pain of acquisition, the pain of conservation, the pain of decay, the pain of loss, the pain of satiety, the pain of the feeling that pleasure is bought at somebody's pain. All craving is the womb of pain. Craving begets *kama* and *krodha*, lust and anger.

23. He who, even here, before he leaves his body, is able to resist the rush of desire and anger, he is with God united. He is the happy man.

The yogi, the truly happy man, is the man of self-control. The power of self-control is learnt here on earth. And self-control leads to bliss.

Control desire! Endure it stoically! Resist it! Call up personal will to fight lust and anger. And, if you fail, rise again and call up the will-power, again and again, until you have conquered, and desires drop dead before you like butterflies killed by frost.

24. Whose happiness is within, whose joy is within, whose light is within, that yogi, becoming divine, attains to the beatitude of God (*Brahma-nirvana*).

The yogi seeks joy within : he rejoices within. He is interiorly illumined.

He rises above the three *gunas* of nature and partakes of



super-nature, the divine nature of the Supreme. He becomes of the Eternal (*Brahma-bhutam*). He is assimilated to *Brahma-nirvana*.

*Brahma-nirvana* is the "blowing out" of all personal desire in the Light, the calm Light of the Eternal. The yogi, reaching this stage, becomes a Rishi and can say with the Buddha :—"My mind is set on the Eternal. Extinguished is all desire!"

25. Their sins destroyed, their doubts (dualities) cut asunder, their minds disciplined, the Rishis, who rejoice in the welfare of all beings, attain to the beatitude of God (*Brahma-nirvana*).

Such are the Rishis, the Seers. Their sins are all consumed, their doubts are all dispelled, their senses are all mastered, their every action is wed to the welfare of fellow creatures. They enter Brahman : they know *nirvana*, the peace of the Eternal.

The Rishi is a realised soul : so he views all beings as his own self. As the *agnani* (the ignorant man) identifies himself with the body, so the Rishi, the wise man, seeing the One Supreme Self in all, identifies himself with all and is engaged in unbroken service of all beings.

26. The beatitude of God lies near to those holy ones who are released from desire and anger, who have subdued their minds and have realisation of the Self.

27. Shutting out external contacts, fixing the gaze between the eye-brows, making even the inward and the outward breaths which move within the nostrils;

28. With senses, mind and *buddhi* controlled, the Sage who is intent on liberation and who has cast away desire, fear and anger, verily is freed.

29. And having known Me as the Enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, as the mighty Ruler of all the worlds, as the Lover of all that lives, he (the Sage) goeth to peace.

To everyone who knoweth his Self (Atman), cometh the benediction of the Peace of the Eternal (*Brahma-nirvana*). For this knowledge is wisdom. It drives out desire and passion. It makes a man subdued in nature and of subdued thoughts.

The process of subdual is helped on by *pranayama*, breath-



control. He who would practise *pranayama* is asked :—

- (1) to exclude external contacts;
- (2) to fix his gaze between the eye-brows; and
- (3) to make equal the outgoing and ingoing breaths (*prana* and *apana*) moving within the nostrils.

But the essential thing is to liberate the senses, mind and *buddhi* (reason) from the dominion of desires, and to set free his nature from fear and passion.

Above all, he must know Krishna as the Assimilator of all *yagna* and *tapas* (sacrifice and austerity), and as the Lord of all the worlds (*sarva-loka*) and the Lover of all the beings.

He, then, who knoweth the Atman (higher Self) and, through the Atman, masters the lower self of senses, mind and reason, he goeth to peace. He is eternally blessed!

The emphasis is, again, on the control of the senses, the mind and *buddhi*. He who, without this control, would try to tread the path, is sure to fall. He may attempt to raise his consciousness into enlightenment by technical methods of yoga, by bringing his gaze between the two eyebrows, he may try to conform to rules of meditation by making equal the outgoing and incoming breaths within the nostrils, he may follow the method of *pranayama*, he will find that all techniques, without preliminary purification of the senses, the mind and the heart, are a premature practice. What availeth him if he goes through external exercises of yoga without having achieved inward purification? His premature practice of meditation will prove dangerous, will lead to neurotic states, to partition of personality, to dissociation of the mind, disturbing its integrity, perhaps, ending in insanity itself. He who would practise true meditation must, first, purify his senses, his mind and his heart.

The true Sage, then, sees the Eternal Krishna who is the One Self of all, who is the great Lord of all the worlds, who is the Lover of all beings, who is not merely a distant world-ruler but an ever-living Friend and ever-loving Helper ready, every moment, to help us in overcoming sin, desire, fear and passion, if we would but trust Him. For such a Sage all doors of wisdom stand open. Such a Sage speedily attaineth peace, the peace of enlightenment, *Brahma-nirvana*.

Thus in the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this be the fifth chapter, entitled :

*Karma Sanyasa Yoga*  
Or The Yoga of Renunciation of Action.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE PATH OF MEDITATION

*The Blessed Lord said :—*

1. He who does the work which it is his duty to do, but seeks no gain from work, no reward, that man is a *sanyasi* and a *yogi*; not he who lights no sacrificial fire and performs no ceremonies.

Sri Krishna re-emphasises the truth that true *sanyasa* or renunciation is yoga.

And *sanyasa* or renunciation is not in this, that the *sanyasi* lights no sacrificial fire (*agni*) and performs no ceremonies. Renunciation or *sanyasa* is in this, that the man, in all his actions, gives up the desire for fruit of action (*karma-phala*). *Sanyasa* is non-attachment, is desirelessness.

2. Verily, true renunciation (*sanyasa*) is yoga, O Arjuna! And he is not a true *yogi* who hath not renounced his *sankalpa* (selfish purpose; the formative will which makes egoistic plans for the future).

The innermost element of *sanyasa* is, also, present in *karma-yoga*. For a true *sanyasi*, like a true *karma-yogi*, is unagitated by desire. The true *karma-yogi* is not stirred by any impulse for reward or fruit of action.

*Sankalpa* should be renounced. All selfish planning, all egoistic programmes of work must the true *yogi* renounce, for they all are born of ignorance (*avidya*), are born out of a feeling that I am the doer. The true *ka ma-yogi* eliminates the "I," egoism, *ahankara*.

So what the Lord emphasises is this : it is not work or action which has to be renounced, but the *sankalpa*,—the formative will which has its own aims and plans its own path, which seeks not the Atman but power to shape the environment and



please the personal self and win applause of others. The way to true yoga is not in this action prompted by the ego, but in disinterested, selfless action.

And in this path, meditation or *dhyana* is a great help.

3. For the sage who wishes to attain to yoga, action is said to be the means: for the same sage, when he has attained to yoga, serenity is said to be the means.

He who would climb to heights of yoga walks the way of disinterested action. When he is enthroned in yoga, enters into union with God, action is no longer needed by him. All his acts fall from him as falleth the ripened fruit. He acts as one who acts not, but through whom works the Divine Will.

Such a sage works for the welfare of suffering humanity (*lokasangraha*), but in serenity. He has no craving for self-seeking activity. His work does not spring from *sankalpa*. He does not seek to impose his own formative will upon the course of events. His work is beautifully blended with *dhyana* (meditation).

4. When a man is not attached to sense-objects or to actions and has renounced all *sankalpas* (egoistic purposes), then he is said to be enthroned in yoga (*yogarudha*).

*Sankalpa* is the root of desire, the root of all self-seeking activity. In IV. 19, the Lord says :—"He whose undertakings are free from desire and *sankalpa* is called a sage." Renounce *sankalpas*! Renounce thoughts of the world, renounce attachment and aversion, renounce the feeling of possession. Do not renounce action. Act, but in utter selflessness. Renounce personal preferences, likes and dislikes, egoistic plans and programmes. Accept what comes, taking it to be the Will of God. Mortify the ego by surrender to the Will Divine. Annihilate the egoistic will. Of it are born desires. "O desire!" we read in the *Mahabharata*, "I know thy root. Thou art born of *sankalpa* or egoistic thought. I shall not think of thee, and thou shalt cease to exist."

5. Let a man lift his self by the Self (Atman) : let him not degrade himself. For, verily, is the Self the only friend of the self, and the Self alone is the enemy of the self.



Lift yourself by the Self, the Atman. How? By pursuing a course of spiritual discipline,—*karma-yoga* or *gnana-yoga* or *bhakti-yoga*. Degrade not yourself by pursuing appetites, desires. Those who are driven by desires go into realms of darkness. You *can* lift yourself! Your *prarabdha* or destiny will not stand in the way of your progress.

The Atman can be the friend or the foe of the ego self, the personal self. The Atman becomes the friend, if we become a channel of the Atman, the Universal, by controlling our desires. The Atman, indeed, becomes our friend, our guide, and our teacher. But if we cleave to created things, the Atman is not in harmony with us, the Atman becomes our enemy.

6. The Self is the friend of him in whom the (lower) self is vanquished by the (higher) Self. But to the unsubdued self, the (higher) Self, verily, becomes hostile like an enemy.

The lower self is the body, the senses and the mind. The man who has conquered his senses attains to self-realisation.

If the self is under control and become an instrument through which the Self (Atman) can work, then the Atman becomes a friend of the self. The Atman becomes a source of inspiration and guidance, the inner teacher of man. But if the self remains egoistic, proud, resistant, then, indeed, the Atman is felt as something hostile. The Atman is, then, no more the source of inspiration but, in disharmony, thwarts our will.

7. When a man hath conquered his (lower) self and has attained to the calm of self-mastery, his supreme Self abideth ever-balanced, concentrated. He is at peace in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, in honour and dishonour.

The self-controlled man is the serene man. He is absorbed in the Atman. He lives balanced in heat and cold, in pain and pleasure, in honour and dishonour.

The self-controlled man is the man of self-realisation.

8. The yogi, whose soul is satisfied with wisdom and knowledge (*gnana* and *vignana*), unwavering, whose senses are subdued, to whom a clod, a stone and gold are the same, is said to be *yukta* (harmonised, controlled in yoga).

*Gnana* is knowledge of *Nirguna*, the Unmanifest *vignana*



is knowledge of *Saguna*, the Manifest.

*Yukta* is the man united with God, the God-realised soul.

The yogi, whose heart has reached fulfilment, through *gnana* and *vignana*, through knowledge and personal experience of the truth of Brahman, is not moved by experiences of the world, by things of the senses. Earth, stone and gold seem alike to him. He is a *yukta*. He has achieved harmony.

9. He who is equal-minded among friends, companions and foes, among strangers and neutrals, among aliens and kinsmen, among saints and sinners, —he hath attained excellence.

For him the distinctions that mean so much to others have no meaning, for his eyes are radiant with the Light that sees the One Life in all. He is free from all attraction and aversion with respect to types of men. He sees God everywhere and in all beings.

10. Let the yogi, seated in solitude and alone, try constantly to concentrate his mind (on the supreme Self), with his self subdued, free from desires and from all impulse of ownership.

Sri Krishna explains to Arjuna a little of the technique of meditation. The full process of meditative yoga cannot be set forth in writing. The process varies for each pupil and must really be learnt from the Guru. You cannot become an artist by studying a manual of oil painting ; and you cannot learn truly how to practise meditative yoga by studying books on meditation.

Essentially, the method of meditation consists of gaining such control over the mind processes that they can be stilled at will. He who would learn meditation should retire into a solitary place. He should be alone. He must control his mind and body. He must free himself from attachment to property and possession : this he can do by looking upon property not as his own but as a trust. He should be devoid of all desires : he should not seek happiness in things of the senses or objects of this world. And he should meditate on the Atman, unceasingly, constantly. The word used is *satatam* : it signifies that nothing should be allowed to come in the way of meditation. During the period set apart for meditation, we should sit in silence, and this silence should be unbroken.

11. In a pure place let him set his firm seat, not



too much raised, nor yet too low, covered with kusha grass, a deer skin and a cloth, one over the other.

12. There, steady on his seat, making his mind one-pointed and restraining his thought and sense, let him practise yoga for the purification of the soul.

Here then is indicated the technique of meditation :—

(1) Choose a quiet place,—undisturbed by friends or visitors. And the place should be "pure," i. e., free from dirt and other impurities. Banks of rivers, tops of mountains, gardens or temples are places which are very helpful : such surroundings exert a calming influence on the heart.

(2) The seat (*asana*), made of a wooden plank or a slab of stone, should not be so high that there is risk of falling if trance (or sleep) supervenes, nor so low that there is danger from poisonous insects such as scorpions or small insects like ants.

(3) *Kusha*, deerskin and cloth should cover the spot,—*kusha* below, deerskin in the middle and cloth uppermost. *Kusha* grass will make the seat soft enough to give ease of body. A deerskin (a leather skin) was useful, in the days when water-proof materials were unknown, in keeping the *jignasu* off the damp ground. If you use a leather skin, see that the skin belongs to an animal who died a natural death and was not killed.

(4) The mind must be calm and free from desire and greed,—a characteristic of the lower mind. To meditate is to go into inward stillness.

13. Holding the body, head and neck, erect and still, gazing fixedly at the tip of his nose, without looking around ;

14. Serene and fearless, firm in the vow of *brahmacharya*, the mind controlled, let him sit, harmonised, his mind turned to Me and aspiring after Me alone.

He who would meditate on the Lord should sit motionless, with the body, head and neck held erect and the vision withdrawn, as if gazing at the tip of his nose. He must not look around him. Then, with a heart, serene and fearless, he should hold his mind from its restless roaming and all his thoughts should be lost in the immensity of the Lord's Being.

He must be firm in *brahmacharya*, firm in control over the sex impulse. The Code of Manu indicates a beautiful programme of conduct for him who would walk the way of *brahma-*



*charya*. The *brahmachari*, we read, should purify his body by taking a bath. He should not wear ornaments. He should not take part in secular music or dance. He should not participate in gambling. He should learn to sleep on the floor. He should not look at women. He should be simple in his diet. He should not wear silk or soft clothes. He should worship God and pay reverence to the Rishis. He should serve and adore his Guru. He should not enter into debate or disputation with anyone. He should always speak the truth. He should not insult another. He should practise *ahimsa*. He should control himself until he annihilates *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*. He should take care of his vital fluid and, as far as possible, he should sleep alone. The vital fluid, preserved aright, generates a peculiar electric current in the body and its radiance makes the *prana* and the *manas* steady, and thought begins automatically to flow in one unbroken current towards the Supreme,—the object of meditation.

The object of *dhyana-yoga* is to meditate on Him, the Lord, the Beloved of the soul, and so to attain union with Him.

In meditation the aspiration must be firmly directed to the One Lord, otherwise the practice of meditation will give rise to visions and psychic illusions. It is the knowledge of the Atman alone that is important. In the yoga of the Atman must thou be absorbed, seeing the Atman by the Atman. Thought must be stilled,—yes. But that is not enough. Thought must grow into aspiration after Him alone. Purity of aspiration is needed. And to this add proximity of a discerning Guru.

15. The yogi, ever harmonised, united thus with the Self, with the mind controlled, goeth to Peace,—the supreme *Nirvana* or Bliss which abideth in Me.

This *Nirvana* or Peace or Liberation is a gift of God. Union with God is never achieved by the unaided personal will of the *jiva*. God must come to the help of man before man can attain to *Nirvana*. Yes,—you must practise concentration. Yes,—you must still the mind by will-power. But something more is necessary. You must surrender yourself completely, absolutely, to the Atman, and God's grace must descend upon you before you are blended with the Self. This blending is *moksha*, liberation.

16. Verily, yoga is not for him who eateth too much, nor for him who abstains too much from eating. Nor is yoga for him who sleepeth too much, nor



for him who keeps awake too much, O Arjuna!

17. Yoga wipes out all pain for him who is temperate in eating and amusement, who is restrained in his actions and regulated in sleep and waking.

Excessive eating must be avoided. It is a wrong conception that the more you eat, the stronger you grow. Over-eating is devitalising and it disturbs the proper circulation of breathing. Over-eating is one of the surest means of breaking *brahmacharya*. Over-eating interferes with one-pointedness of your inner consciousness.

The quantity of food you take should fit in with requirements of your health and your power of digestion. And the food you eat should be such as has been obtained by fair and honest means, not purchased with corrupt money, nor secured by causing pain to God's creatures. The food should be *sattvic* and pure.

Excessive fasting, too, must be avoided. Fasting does good both to physical and spiritual life, but only when it is regulated.

So, too, recreation should be regulated. It should be indulged in only to the extent it is necessary to refresh you, and it should be innocent in character.

Your eating, behaviour, conduct in daily life should also be regulated. Each one has to do certain duties, e. g. worship of God, service of the poor, offering respect to parents and elders, *Guru namaskaram*; practice of *tapasya*, carrying on trade, taking bath, etc. They should be done in the proper way.

Sleep and wakefulness, too, should be regulated. Six hours' sleep is regarded as sufficient. This general rule may be modified according to bodily requirements.

He who would attain to meditation walks the middle path. He is a man of divine discipline, and so takes the mean between indulgence and asceticism. He maintains moderation in eating and recreation, in sleeping and waking, in exertions of actions, in speech and silence, in labour and rest. His day-to-day life shows the absence of excitement and nervousness, of indiscretion and idle talk, of indulgence and self-torture. He knows no excess in action.

The man of meditation attains to self-restraint and so knows no pain produced by actions of the uncontrolled,—pain due to restlessness, discontent, self-reproach, grief, anger and fear.

18. When the disciplined mind is fixed on the Self alone, from all desire freed, then is the man said to be



harmonised in yoga.

Here is the consummation of meditation : he surrenders himself entirely to the Atman, identifies himself with the Atman,—the unchanging Witness of every experience, every thought, every sensation.

The disciplined mind (*chitta*) no longer wanders after outer things or affairs. The *chitta* is absorbed in the *Svarupam*, the vision of the Lord. The man is no longer a wanderer after the outer : in this wandering is *dukkha*, the pain of the *jiva*. The man enters into the bliss of *shanti*, *atman-ananda*.

19. As a lamp in a windless place flickereth not, to such is likened the yogi of subdued thought, absorbed in union with the Atman, the Self.

The flame of a lamp cannot be made steady in a windy place : so you cannot make your inner consciousness steady as long as the winds of desire play upon it. You must withdraw to a centre where no earthly attachments and affections can invade you. If you are to succeed in meditation, then must you eliminate the ego of desires and concentrate upon the one supreme Atman. Eliminate the mind, the ego, the desire-self : it belongs to the lower level of consciousness. Rise to the higher level, the *buddhi* : there is the windless place. Be poised there and concentrate on the Atman, and you will achieve *dhyana-yoga* and be bright with the brightness of the Light of the Spirit.

20. That in which the mind, restrained by the practice of concentration, comes to rest, that in which he beholds the Self by the self and rejoices in the Self ;

21. That in which he findeth the supreme Delight,—which the *buddhi* can grasp and is beyond the reach of the senses,—wherein established, he never again wanders from the truth ;

22. That, on gaining which he thinketh there is no greater gain beyond it, wherein established, he is not shaken even by the gravest grief ;

23. Let that be known by the name of yoga, this breaking of contact with sorrow. This yoga must be practised resolutely and with unwearied heart.



Through continued meditation, the mind is brought under control and gets firmly established in God alone. The yogi, then, lives in the world but is detached from the world, once for all. He has only one joy,—the joy of God-realisation. He needs no other joy. This joy is beyond the grasp of the senses and is apprehended through the purified *buddhi*. This joy is eternal, absolute, supreme.

Having gained this joy, the yogi thinks there is no greater gain beyond it. To him all the joys of the earth,—or of the *svarga loka* (heaven world),—wealth, dominion, power, honour, fame, are momentary, transient, insignificant, worthless.

And in the midst of the heaviest sorrow, he remains firm and unshaken as a rock. Weapons may cut his body, but his soul is unmovable : lightning and heat, shower and cold may touch his body, his soul remains untouched : bereavements may come to him, insult and ignominy may attack him, his peace is undisturbed. For he hath risen beyond the body. He wears a body in the eyes of the world : in reality, he lives in the spirit world. He is not under the control of any modifications of matter. He is established in God. He lives and moves and has his being, even on this earth-plane, in the Life Eternal.

This does not mean that his body, his senses and his mind have ceased to function. He hears, he sees, he reflects. His senses, his mind, his body function according to his *prarabhda* or what he has earned in previous births. But his consciousness rises above them all.

This state,—freedom from all sorrow,—is true yoga, is God-realisation. But this state of yoga is not easy to attain. It should be practised resolutely and with an unwearied heart. The beginner is disheartened, when he does not see any immediate results following his *sadhana*. After some days,—may be, weeks or months,—of meditation and discipline, he begins to lose heart, and says to himself :—"The strain is too much for me. I see no end to my efforts. I doubt if this discipline will ever be crowned with success." Hence the need of perseverance in this path. The yoga practice should be clung to with firm determination. He, who would walk the way of meditation, should not let himself be overcome by a feeling of defeatism. He should stick to the teaching of his Guru, regarding it as the one essential duty of his life. One day, he will win the goal, viz. God-realisation.

24. Renouncing, without exception, all desires born of *sankalpa* (selfish will or imagination), restraining by the mind all the senses on every side ;

25. Little by little, let him gain tranquillity by means



of *buddhi* (discrimination) controlled by steadiness, and having fixed the mind on the Self, let him not think of anything.

In these two *slokas* is summed up the Lord's teaching concerning the *sadhanas* for yoga.

1. The first is renunciation of desires. Desires are born of *sankalpa* : desires make the mind unsteady. Therefore must all desires be renounced.

2. Restraint of the senses is the second step. The senses, says the Lord, must be curbed on every side : the mind must curb them.

3. When the waves of desires have ceased, and all the senses are stilled, take the help of the *buddhi* : control it by "steadiness." In other words, eliminate fear. He who treads the path knows that when *sankalpa* and desires are set aside and the senses are stilled, a subtle fear sets in :—"My mind is restrained : shall I be able to think? My senses are now curbed : shall I be able to work?" This fear may be short-lived and, if your Guru is by you, his grace will help you to overcome fear speedily.

4. Your mind (*manas*) should rest in the Atman. Never forget that the object of meditation is God, so your constant endeavour should be to see that your consciousness rests continually in God. Once you sit to meditation, try to see that your consciousness does not, even for a moment, withdraw itself from God and wander to worldly objects. Therefore, eliminate thinking from the mind. Make the mind receptive. Here, too, *abhyasa* (practice) is necessary. For, even when the mind has reached stability, there is no knowing when the mind may again wander. Therefore, you must be prepared to bring the mind back from its wild wanderings, again and again.

5. You must play the policeman, and catch the mind, again and again, as it goes out on its wanderings. This *abhyasa* of catching and bringing the mind back is an essential part of spiritual life. Catch it and bring it back, again and again, until it determines to abide in the Self.

*Abhyasa*, then, briefly is :—Bring back the fellow! Bring the mind from its wanderings to the Atman!

This *abhyasa* would be done everyday : and it is not merely a matter of an hour of daily meditation. The detachment and the insight achieved during the meditation period should continue throughout the day and, as far as possible, throughout the hours of sleep as well. The whole day long, the true disciple must hold on firmly to the aspirations and realisations



he was able to gain during the meditation period. Be very watchful of your thoughts and aspirations and impulses and actions during the day : for often five minutes of anger and thirty minutes of despondency or a very short period of passion or uncontrolled thought may undo all that you achieved in your meditation in the morning. So be on your guard, every hour, every minute, remembering that it is a long, uphill struggle, that progress is slow, that attainment seems far off. But the disciple must not despair. Constant practice must be his watchword. Walk on, O pilgrim, on the Path! Be unwearied in your efforts. Believe in the cosmic law. It will not let your slightest effort go astray. One day you, too, will achieve!

26. As often as the wavering and unsteady mind runneth away, so often let the man restrain and bring it back to the control of the Self alone.

This requires tremendous will-power, for the mind runs away, again and again, and you have to run after it, again and again, to bring it back. After sometime you feel tired : you, also, feel tempted,—so strongly tempted,—to succumb to its allurements and sophistic arguments. The least feebleness on your part gives added strength to the clever, tricky mind : you are confused. Then, must you cry, with the deep cry of the heart, for the grace of the Guru. When it comes to your help, the mind will be drawn back from the objects and allurements of the world and induced to concentrate on God. Then may you succeed in *dhyana-yoga*, not otherwise.

27. Supreme joy cometh to the yogi whose mind is peaceful, whose passions are calmed, who is purged from sin and hath become one with God.

28. The yogi who thus, ever harmonising the self, hath put away sin, experiences easily the infinite bliss of contact with the Eternal.

Blessed is such a man. After many struggles,—may be, of many lives,—he beareth fruit, like a tree long bound by winter frost but suddenly bursting, one day, into glorious bloom. The yogi, one blessed day, bursteth into the Light. He attains what the Gita calls *brahma samsparsham* : he cometh in contact with the Eternal. God is to him no longer a vague background of life. God is felt in actual contact. The yogi hath in time touched timelessness. The Eternal hath blossomed in him. His soul is intoxicated with infinite bliss.



29. His self harmonised by yoga, he seeth the One Self abiding in all beings and all beings in the One Self; every where he seeth the same (One Ancient Self).

There are three great landmarks on the path of evolution :—

(1) The first is the entry on the path. This is reached when the consciousness dawns on the Atman, the Spirit, as the Real, the Eternal, as distinguished from the body, which is transient, passing. The Atman perisheth not. Him no weapons can cleave, no fire can burn, no winds can dry. The Atman never dies!

(2) The second great landmark is the consciousness that this Eternal Atman abideth in the heart within. Within the heart of everyone doth Krishna take birth : the *avatara* is born in every heart. The divine birth of Krishna is within us,—not merely in an historic Gokul or the hourse of an historic Vasudeva or Yashoda.

(3) The third great landmark is indicated in this *sloka* (No. 29). It is the perception that the One Atman that is in my heart also abideth in all beings,—the realisation of the unity of all life in the One Self. No object, no creature, is sundered from the One Self. All beings are in the One Atman.

This realisation, when it first bursts upon the yogi, is even as an awakening from a dream. To such a yogi, the sun and the moon, the earth and the stars, time and space, ether and air, fire and water, day and night, body and mind, senses and *buddhi*,—all these are an apparition, a vision of the thought of God. He alone pervades them all.

He, who develops this *samadrishti*, says :—“As I seek happiness, so do all. As I avoid pain, so do all. As myself is dear to me, so is dear to each one his self.” The worldly man finds his pleasure in combating, fighting, breaking down others, thinking that his own happiness lies in making others unhappy. The man of *samadrishti* realises that he can never purchase happiness for himself with the suffering of others.

Why is it difficult to put this teaching of the Gita into practice? Because man has developed *mamatva*, not *samatva*,—the sense of “mine” and “not mine,” and not the sense of the One-in-all. This son is mine and the other one belongs to another. This sense of separateness is the cause of the world’s great woe. Arjuna’s depression and difficulty are, also, due to his sense of separateness. This man is my relative : that man is not. The sense of separateness, alas! is at the root of man’s tragedy. And this sense will not go, as long as the mind is wavering, wandering, entangled, in *moha*, in sense of allurements, wander-



ing from restlessness to restlessness. The cure of the world's tragedy is in the teaching of the Gita :—"Curb the mind! Control the mind! Make it stable! Focus it in the Atman! See the Atman in all!" The cure is in *samadrishti*.

30. He who seeth Me everywhere and seeth everything in Me, to him I am not lost and he is not lost to Me.

All the different forms of beings in this world are, to such a yogi, so many forms of God, garments of the One Eternal Self. Rightly does Tulsidas say :—"I know the whole creation to be a manifestation of Sri Krishna and Sri Rama and so, joining the two palms of my hands, I offer my salutations to all."

The yogi, who has a vision of the Divine Form encompassing the world, never may lose sight of Him and He never will lose sight of the yogi. Naught may break the link between him and the Lord.

31. The yogi, who is established in unity, worshipeth Me, abiding in all beings; he liveth in Me, howsoever he may be active.

Wherever he may be and whatever work he may be doing, the yogi liyes established in the ever-living divine Unity. Whatever be his outer life, his outer actions, in his inward being, in his inner life, he dwells in God. The yogi has touched the Lord and the touch of Krishna hath awakened in his heart the flame of love. Love is the great liberator of life. And, with the awakening of love, he sees neither himself nor others; but everywhere and in all things, he beholds the dark blue Shyama form. His foes may smite him : his friends may smile on him. He sees in all the bright shining eyes of his beloved, Krishna, the Divine Lover. And, in utter worship of the blue form of Shyama, he pours himself as a sacrifice to creation.

The worship of such a disciple of the Lord is different from the worship of churches and temples. His offering is something more than hymns and rites. He offers to his Beloved the worship of sacrifice.

32. He is the perfect yogi who seeth with equality everything, in the image of his own self, whether in pleasure or in pain (i. e., the pleasure or pain of others is his own pleasure and pain).

Whoso regards the joy or grief of others as his own is the



highest yogi. He identifies himself equally with the whole universe. He looks on all as his own self. He regards nothing in this world as being separate from him, and so he would not inflict pain, in any form, on any creature, but would constantly endeavour to bring happiness to all. He believes in universal brotherhood.

*Arjuna said :—*

33. This yoga of equanimity which Thou hast declared, O Krishna, I see no stable foundation for it, on account of restlessness (of the mind).

34. For the mind is, verily, fickle, O Krishna! It is turbulent, strong and obstinate. I deem it as hard to control as the wind.

*The Blessed Lord said :—*

35. Without doubt, O Arjuna, the mind is hard to curb and the mind is restless. But it can be curbed by constant practice (*abhyasa*) and by dispassion (*vairagya*).

*Abhyasa*, constant practice, can restrain the wild and wayward mind. *Abhyasa* is practice, is repetition of *mantra*, *japa*, name of Deity, study of the teaching of the *shastras* (sacred books) and *sant-bani* (wisdom of the saints) and the lives of saints, association with *satpurkhas*, constant prayer, calling on God with tears in the eyes.

*Vairagya* (dispassion) is absence of thirst for all the three *gunas* or modes of *prakriti*. The thirst is eliminated when the practice is carried on, with faith and reverence, for sufficient length of time, through knowledge of *Purusha* or Spirit. *Vairagya* may be cultivated by constant reminder to oneself that the world is transient and is a theatre of sorrow and suffering.

36. Yoga is hard to attain by one who is not self-controlled. But by the self-controlled it is attainable by striving through proper means. Such is My conviction.

The Lord points out that this yoga, though difficult of achievement, may yet be attained by one who ceaselessly strives (*yata*) to bring the mind under control. There are several *sadhanas* (disciplines) which should be practised even after



the mind has been brought under control. Some of these *sadhanas* may be briefly indicated :—

(1) Renounce all objects of enjoyment : renounce, also, the desire for them.

(2) Be one-pointed, fixing your mind constantly upon God.

(3) Endeavour to see that the One Lord fills the whole universe, both within and without you. Cultivate the discipline of mentally viewing the whole world and your own self as linked up intimately and indissolubly with God.

(4) Constantly say to yourself, the activities of the body, the senses and the mind are not yours : they are being performed by the *gunas*. The senses act on the objects of senses : you are only a witness of the activities of the *gunas*. You perceive, through your *buddhi*, the sense-objects and the senses, acting and interacting one on the other.

(5) Cultivate the thought that all objects, all activities are passing, transient. What abides is the Lord : and He is within you. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," said Jesus.

(6) Select one of the manifestations of the Lord and concentrate on it mentally. Thus you may choose as your *Ishta*,— Krishna or Rama or Nanak or Kabir or Jesus or Shiva or Vishnu or Vivasvan (the Sun-god) or the Divine Mother or the *Visvarupa* (the Universal Form). Having selected your *Ishta*, keep a picture of it in your mind and concentrate. Say to yourself :— "My *Ishta* is ever present!" With utmost reverence and love, worship the picture or image that you select as a symbol of your *Ishta*, perform *japa* of the name of your *Ishta*, and offer your *Ishta* flowers, leaves, fruits, water, etc.

(7) It is necessary to add that you must bear witness to your worship in purified actions, in your daily life. Each day, do your duty without attachment, without any desire for fruit. In success or failure, remain calm, mentally undisturbed. And when you serve the poor or give anything in charity, do it with faith and reverence, for the sake of God or your *Ishta*. Say to yourself :—"Let me be an instrument in the hands of God, and gladly do whatever He would ask me to do!"

*Arjuna said :—*

37. He, who is unsubdued, though he has faith (*shraddha*), he whose mind wanders away from yoga and fails to attain perfection in yoga, what way does he go, O Krishna?

Arjuna's question is brief but significant. What happens to the man who has faith but who does not succeed in bringing



the mind under control, who is not able to subdue his passions, and whose mind is diverted from yoga, even at the time of death? He strives for God-realisation but does not succeed. What becomes of him after death?

38. Does he not perish like a rent cloud, O Krishna, fallen from both, unsteadfast and bewildered in the path of the Eternal?

39. O Krishna, dispel completely this doubt of mine, for there is none to be found save Thyself who can destroy this doubt.

*"Fallen from both"* : does such a man, Arjuna asks, miss both,—this life and the life eternal? Such men are, indeed, many. They have not pursued the hard path of yoga to its end. Are their efforts useless? If so, why begin a course in yoga, when we are not able to complete it? Is such a man lost as a broken cloud is lost in the sky?

It is true, several wander away from yoga : they become *yoga-bhrishta*. Arjuna's question is natural. What becomes of the aspirant who dies before he attains? In some cases, the failure to attain may be due to shortness of life. In some cases, again, it may be due to weakness of the senses at the time of death. As St. Paul said :—"The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Arjuna's question must be carefully understood. Arjuna is thinking of a man who strays from the path leading to God-realisation and yet who has nothing to stand upon. He has all along performed actions without any desire for fruit and, in the moment of death, he finds that his mind is diverted by some distraction, some attachment, some physical ailment, and he does not realise God. He departs from this world without God-realisation : and after death he does not want *svarga-loka*. Throughout, he has worked without any desire for fruit or enjoyment. What becomes of such a man who is deprived of both heaven and God-realisation?

*The Blessed Lord said :—*

40. O Arjuna, neither in this life nor in the life to come is there destruction for such a man; for never doth any who worketh righteousness, O beloved, tread the path of woe.

Sri Krishna points out that a *yoga-bhrishta* is not lost. No



man who is a sincere seeker can come to an evil end. So let us not despair, even if we fall, for the gracious Lord is the Master of love and compassion. He knows our weaknesses. He, too, knows of our human imperfect efforts to overcome them. God is not a tyrant. We must not despair. No sincere effort will ever go in vain. The Gita does not, like a number of orthodox churches, teach that if a man goes astray, he is damned to hell or that he falls into lower forms of life, becoming a dog or an insect or a worm in his next birth. The Gita is a scripture of hope and teaches the truth that a *yoga-bhrishta* gradually (1) through *sadhanas*; (2) through study of the scriptures; and (3) through *sanga* of a *satpurkha* and the grace of his Guru ascends and, step by step, rises to purity of heart.

Whatever the obstacles, whatever the failures, whatever the lapses, one thing you must always remember. Never lose sight of God-realisation as the goal of your life. It may be that in spite of your *satsanga*, in spite of your fellowship with great souls, in spite of your *japa* and *dhyana*, you succumb to sinful acts. Do not be depressed, for the holy influence of fellowship with the *satpurkha* and of your daily *satsanga*, your *japa* and *dhyana* will gradually enable you to get rid of sins. You will become virtuous. From virtue, you will gradually rise in the scale of evolution, until you learn *sharanam*, *Krishna-arpanam*, self-surrender to the Lord, dedication to the Life Divine. Step by step, you will ascend, you will not fall into the dreaded life of a beast.

41. Having attained to the worlds of the righteous and having dwelt there, for very many years, the *yoga-bhrishta* is born again in a pure and prosperous house.

The *yoga-bhrishta* does not go to hell. Nor does he take birth in lower forms of animal life. The *yoga-bhrishta* goes to *punyakritamlukan*, i. e., to worlds inhabited by righteous men. He goes to a celestial world, to a higher plane than the earth. When he takes birth again, it is in the house of a prosperous and pious man, the house of a noble soul, where he gets opportunities to advance in evolution.

42. Or he may be born into a family of yogis, endowed with wisdom. But such a birth as this is very difficult to obtain in this world.

When one is born in a family of yogis, he has opportunities of evolution, which he cannot have either in the heaven-world or in the house of a rich man. Born in a yogi's house, he can



start yogic practices very early in life.

43. There he recovers the insight (the mental impressions of union with the Divine) acquired in his former life, Arjuna, and so he strives anew for the attainment of perfection.

Progress on the path of perfection may be slow. One may have to tread, perhaps, through many lives before reaching perfection. But never is the sincere effort wasted. What we acquire during a life-time does not perish at death. It becomes the starting-point of further development.

The word *buddhi*, which forms part of the compound *buddhi-samyogam*, in this *sloka*, refers to insight,—the spiritual insight or the partial even-mindedness acquired in his previous birth. When he is born in a favourable environment (in a pure family or family of a yogi), the latencies within him are automatically roused, and so he strives for God-realisation with greater vigour than before.

44. Because of his practices in the previous life, he is carried on irresistibly. Even he who seeks the knowledge of yoga goes beyond *Shabda Brahman* (Vedic rules and rituals).

*Shabda Brahman* refers to the Veda and the injunctions of the Veda, the Vedic rules and rituals.

The Veda is a good help in the beginning. But when the Atman within is awakened, we pass beyond the *Shabda Brahman*, the Vedic rule. The Vedic rule is even as a boat. You need it to cross to the other side : but having arrived there, you no longer need the boat.

45. Verily, the yogi, labouring with assiduity, purified from sin, perfecting himself through many lives, reacheth the supreme goal.

The yogi, who struggles hard, who cleans himself of impurities, moves gradually towards perfection and reaches, at last,—may be through many births,—the supreme goal.

The supreme goal is God-realisation, Self-realisation, the attainment of eternal Peace.

What a noble teaching this! Every seeker attains, at last. A *yoga-bhrishta* rises, step by step, to realisation. All human beings are won back to God. Even the most rebellious, the most sinful ones are, at last, reclaimed and restored into



harmony by God's love. The Gita's note is hope, is *mukti* for all. This, indeed, is the purpose of evolution, that all human beings will, one day, be redeemed.

The Gita holds out to every seeker the hope,—aye, the promise,—that though he falls a hundred times, he will rise again. His failure is temporary. Having started on his journey,—the *yatra* of his life,—he will reach the end, one day, for life is one, life is continuous. Man's physical body (*sthula sarira*), passes away : his subtle body (*sukhshama sarira*), also, dies : but his *karana sarira* (the causal body) abides with man, until he attains to *moksha* or realisation. In the *karana sarira* are collected, compressed, concentrated, all the *sanskaras* of man. Through all births and deaths, the *karana sarira* lives. Therefore, think of the *karana sarira* ! Whatever good or evil you have done in the *sthula sarira* abides, in the form of *sanskaras*, in the *karana sarira*. Therefore, see that, in thought and action (*vichara* and *achara*), you remain pure : for any impurities which you let pass in and through the physical body will remain in the *karana sarira*, and your task of purifying the *karana sarira* will become all the harder. Therefore, come what may, cling to purity of motive and purpose, and bear witness to the Lord. If this physical body perish, let it. This physical body is but a drop. What avails you to keep intact this drop of the physical body and do harm to the *karana sarira*, that goes with you and remains till the end?

46. The yogi is greater than the ascetic; the yogi is greater even than the Vedic scholar; the yogi is greater than the man of ritual works. Therefore, do thou become a yogi, O Arjuna !

47. And of all yogis, he who, full of faith adoreth Me, with his Self abiding in Me,—he is deemed by Me to be the most completely harmonised (the most devoted).

The ascetic (*tapasvi*) or anchorite inflicts severe penances on his body : but greater than the *tapasvi* is the yogi.

The knower of the *Vedas* (*gnani*) is great, indeed : but greater still is the yogi.

The *karmi*, the man of activity, too, is great : but greater than he is the true yogi.

*Tapasya*, knowledge of the *Vedas*, and activity are all aids to spiritual unfolding : but all the three find their fulfilment in the yogi of meditation, who lives perpetually in the divine presence. He beholds Krishna within himself and adores the



Lord in all. Such a yogi sees the Light of the Atman in his own heart and in the face of all creatures, all beings. Be thou such a yogi, an illumined one, O Arjuna!

And the best of yogis, the Gita says, is he who offers to the Lord his love (*bhakti*), who gives his heart to the Lord and worships Him in faith and love.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this be the sixth chapter entitled :

*Dhyana Yoga*

Or The Yoga of Meditation.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE CYCLE OF MANIFESTATION

*The Blessed Lord said :—*

1. Hear thou, O Arjuna, how, practising yoga, with mind ever set on Me, with Me as thy refuge, thou shalt, without doubt, know Me in full.
2. In full I will declare to thee what is wisdom (*gnana*) and what is knowledge (*vignana*), which having known, there is nothing more here needeth to be known.

Chapter VII is called *gnana-vignana yoga*.

What is the difference between *gnana* and *vignana*?

To know the essence (*tatva*) of *Nirguna Nirakara Parmatman* is *gnana*; to know the *leela* of *Saguna Sakara* is *vignana*.

The *Nirguna Parmatman* is named Brahman (to be distinguished from Brahma,—a god). The *Saguna* is named Bhagavan. Knowledge of Brahman is *gnana* : knowledge of Bhagavan's *svarupa* and *prabhava* (power) is *vignana*.

Bhagavan is manifested God. Krishna claims to be He. "Knowledge" (*gnana*) becomes "realisation," when we see the Eternal (Brahman) on the plane of manifestation.

In Chapter VII, then, we read of Brahman and of Bhagavan, and of the four types of persons (*adhikaris*) who worship Him.

This Krishna-knowledge comes when the *jignasu* (the seeker) becomes an initiate. "With this knowledge of Krishna, there is nothing more here needeth to be known." This Krishna-knowledge is All-knowledge. It is the knowledge of the divine centre of Arjuna and, indeed, of all mankind : it is infinite divine knowledge.

Not Arjuna alone, but all mankind may attain this knowledge,—the Krishna-knowledge,—if they will but resolve to tread the path that leadeth unto the perfect life. It is the end of man's



*karma*. Alas! men walk their way of ease and comfort, but do not tread the path that leadeth unto the perfect life.

3. Among thousands of men, scarce one striveth for perfection : and among those who strive and win, scarce one doth know Me as I am in truth.

He knoweth who, giving up attachment to the world, takes refuge in Krishna, is devoted to Him with mind and *buddhi* (understanding), and ever dwells in thought and action on Him. But rare is such a man.

Men do not realise the value of human birth. One is born a man to practise the spiritual disciplines for attaining to the Eternal. Even the *devas* (gods) have not the opportunities, as have men, to grow in purity and self-control. For the twain demand conquest of the flesh : and the *devas* have no flesh, no *sthula sarira*. Human beings have flesh : but many, alas! have not *shraddha*, *bhakti* in the Lord, nor fellowship with a *satpurukha* (an advanced soul). Many succumb to egoism, desire and influence of environment.

4. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind and understanding and the sense of "I,"—such is the eightfold division of My nature.

Krishna proceeds to tell about Himself "as He is."

Krishna's nature (*prakriti*) is two-fold : there is His "inferior" *prakriti* and there is His "higher" *prakriti*.

Inferior *prakriti* is *apara prakriti* (matter). It has eight divisions:—5 natural units,—earth, water, air, fire and ether,—and 3 others,—mind (*manas*), understanding (*buddhi*), and ego (*ahankara*) : these are the three divisions of *antah-karan*.

These eight elements are all perishable. The *prakriti* of every *mah* has these eight divisions,—all perishable.

5. This is My inferior nature. Know My other and higher nature,—the life or soul,—by which this world is upheld, O Arjuna!

Higher or superior *prakriti* is *para prakriti*. It is the *jiva*, life-force. It is the life (*jiva*) of all *bhutas* (beings). It unifies. It upholds the world. Without it, the world would not be! It is the basis and sustainer of the universe. It is the "breath" of beings.

It is the "womb of all creatures" (*yonini bhutani*).

6. Know this to be the womb of all beings. I am



the origin of the whole universe and likewise its dissolution.

All things and all beings have come out of God. Without Him there is nothing. *Maya* is the "Mother," Krishna is the "Father" of manifestation. "I am the Father who lays the seed!"

As the rays of the sun come out of the one sun and are part of the sun, so do all beings and all things come out of the One Lord. All things are rays of God. Each soul is a ray of the Lord. God is the "essence" of all.

The universe moves in cycles. There is the cycle of manifestation (evolution) : there is the cycle of *pralaya* (involution). The cycles and cyclic law are due to the Lord. As clouds are born of the sky and dwell in the sky and vanish in the sky, so are all the worlds born in the Lord : they dwell in the Lord : they disappear in the Lord.

Each soul is a ray of God and has its origin in God. One God is in all.

Manifestation begins when the One becomes two,—matter and life,—a body and a soul. Matter, body, is the physical form : the life is the in-dwelling soul. All beings in manifestation are prompted by an in-dwelling soul.

There is evolution and there is involution. The world is like a tree,—an *ashwattha* tree. It has growth : it has decay. There are periods of childhood, youth, manhood, and old age in history. There are seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter.

In winter there is disintegration of customs and morals, of faith and piety, of family and state. And in winter cometh the *Avatara* to renew and re-vitalise the eternal life of religion, the *Sanatana Dharma*.

So it goes on,—until the "day" is over. The universe has "day" and "night." The "day" is evolution : the "night" is involution. In the "day" there are cultures and civilisations, arts and sciences, kingdoms and conflicts,—the whole process of history.

After the cycle of evolution comes the cycle of the "night," involution,—when all things, all institutions enter into *pralaya* (dissolution) : and all men go into it,—all, except Krishna-*bhaktas*, devotees of the Lord. They go to the Abode of the Lord : they are freed from the wheel of birth and death. Except these *bhaktas*, all men and all things go into *pralaya* and then come back into manifestation. So it goes on,—the play of the Lord, His *leela*.

7. There is naught whatsoever higher than I, O



Arjuna! All that is here is threaded on Me as rows of pearls are threaded on a single string.

8. I am the fresh taste in the waters, O Arjuna, and the light in the moon and the sun. I am the One Word of worship (Om) in all the Vedas. I am the sound in ether and the seed of strength in men.

9. And fragrance pure in earth am I, and the red light in the fire. I am the life in all that lives and the austerity in ascetics.

10. Know Me, O Arjuna, as the eternal seed of all beings. I am the wisdom of the wise. I am the splendour of the splendid.

11. I am the strength of the strong, free from passion and desire. Yet am I (right) desire which is not contrary to *dharma* (the law of common good), O Arjuna!

12. And know that the three *gunas*, the three states of being,—pure (*sattvika*), passionate (*rajasa*), and slothful (*tamasa*),—are from Me alone. I hold them all, they hold Me not.

The Lord is the support of the *gunas*, yet is He above them. He transcends them.

13. The whole world, deluded by these three *gunas*, modes of nature, knows Me not who am above them and immutable.

14. Hard, indeed, it is to pierce this divine *maya* (illusion) of Mine, caused by the *gunas*. But those who (in faith) come to Me alone pass beyond the illusion.

Men, alas! are under delusion, and know not Krishna, the Lord. This delusion of men is due to the divine illusion, *maya*. It is *daivi maya*, says Krishna. It is not a *sadharana* (ordinary) *maya*, like the juggler's trick or the *asura*'s magic. It is "My *maya*," says the Lord. "I am the Lord, the *Swami*, *Mayapati*."

Deluded men depend upon their own natural qualities, the three *gunas*, and not upon Krishna. Men are entangled in.



the "snares of delusion," and so men build up a false ego-personality, a degenerate "self," corrupt and of the flesh. Alas! men forget the Lord who dwells deep in the cavern of the soul. Yet they "who come to Me," come to the Krishna hidden deep in their hearts; "they cross over this *maya* (illusion)." Such men are so few. So many are without spiritual discernment : they embrace the nature of demons (*asuram bhavam*) : they become wicked among men.

15. The evil doers, who are deluded, sunk low in the human scale, whose minds are carried away by illusions, and who have embraced the nature of demons,—they come not to Me.

They are overcome by *maya* : it is *dustara* (difficult to cross). There is but one way to cross it,—the way of *sarana bhakti*. The *saranagat bhakta* knows the Lord and surrenders all to the Lord. All he has,—wife, child, wealth, body, mind, fame, etc.,—he, the *bhakta*, brings as his *puja samagri* to the Lord, surrendering to Him all he has and all he is. He claims nothing as his own.

16. Of four kinds are the virtuous ones who worship Me : the man who suffers, the man who yearns for knowledge, the man who seeks wealth, and the man of wisdom, O Arjuna!

Four types of *bhaktas* (devotees) there be who come to the Lord. And all the four are *sukritinah*, i. e., are persons of noble deeds.

These types of *bhaktas* are :—

(1) The *artah bhaktas* : they are the afflicted. They seek the Lord's protection in distress.

(2) The *jignasu bhaktas*. Who is a *jignasu*? A seeker after Light. A *jignasu* has no craving for money or pleasure. A *jignasu* is more than a scholar. A *jignasu bhakta* is a Truth-seeker. He prays to the Lord for illumination. He wants the *tatva* (essence) of life.

In ancient India there were bands of *jignasus* : they travelled, far and wide, in search of a *guru*, one who could speak to them of the *tatva*, the essence of the universe. And they lived simple lives, pure lives : and they prayed to the Lord for illumination.

(3) The *artharthi bhaktas* : they seek success in their undertakings. Maybe, they want possessions, maybe, they want happiness in the heaven-world after death. But they do not stand as supplicants at the world's door. They worship the



Lord for success. They look up to Him to grant them success. They have *shraddha* (faith) in Him.

(4) The *gnani bhaktas*, the wise ones.

What is *gnana*? God-realisation. The *gnani bhakta* sees the One Lord in all objects, in all creatures, in all countries, in all races, in all scriptures, in all prophets and saints. He is absorbed in devotion to the Lord. He forgets the world : he forgets his body : he forgets desires : he forgets his "ego." He is God-illuminated, God-absorbed!

To a *gnani bhakta*, then, the world is a vision of God. He, the Lord, is, to the *gnani bhakta*, the essence (*tatva*) of water : the sapidity, *rasa*, of water is God! What a sacred world! When you drink water, you drink in the Lord! And the *tatva* of the sun and the moon is God : He shineth in them! And He is the essence of the Vedas, the Om of the scriptures. He is the *shabda* (Word) of ether. The manhood of men is He. And earth's pure fragrance is He : the earth is holy! And He shineth in fire, and He is the Life of all that lives, and He is the *tapasya* of the yogi, and He is the *buddhi* of the wise. And he is the strength of the strong, and He is the *tejas* (splendour) of all things that radiant be. Vasudeva is all! The Lord is Life and Light and Love! *Ecce Deus!* Behold, the world is a vesture of the Lord!

17. Of these, the wise one (*gnani*), who lives in constant union with the Divine, whose devotion is single-minded, is the best. I am beloved of him and he is beloved of Me.

Of the four classes of *bhaktas*, Sri Krishna singles out the fourth (*gnani bhakta*) as the best. For the other three are swayed by desire and the attraction of objects : but the *gnani bhakta* is possessed of spiritual knowledge, wisdom, *gnana*.

Wisdom or *gnana* is emancipation from the immediate, the particular. In *gnana*, (1) you escape from sensation; (2) you rise above logic, above movement, mechanism, form, above intellection; and (3) you rise to recognition of the ultimate Essence and significance of the universe. And in the presence of the Essence you sit in silence,—seeing nothing but God. He is the Essence, *svarupa*, of all that is.

The *gnani* knows that all things are out of the three *gunas* of *apara prakriti*, and he knows that God is the Support (*param adhara*) of all *gunas* and things. But the *gnani* knows, too, that God is above the three *gunas*. He transcends all things : for things are finite, perishable, *anitya*, not *sthira*, and the Lord does not need them. They are not in the Lord always : the Lord is not in them always : they vanish! But the Lord is



established in His Glory! The Lord is immanent, yet transcendent. He is in the perishable things but *nirlepa* (detached). Clouds do not dwell in ether always : the clouds go, but ether still exists. So things come and go : they are passing. But the Lord shineth for ever in His Glory!

18. All these are noble, but I deem the wise as verily Myself. For, being completely harmonised, he regards Me as the Goal Supreme.

19. At the end of many births, the man grown wise cometh to Me, knowing that the Lord (Vasudeva) is all that is. Such a mahatma (great soul) is rarely found.

Beloved of the Lord is the *gnani bhakta* : but the Lord does not discard the other three classes of *bhaktas*. "Noble are all these," says Sri Krishna; "but the *gnani* is My own Self." The *gnani bhakta* and the Lord are *yukta atma*. God looks at him : he looks at God! The twain abide together for ever.

Such a *gnani*, the *tatva gnani*, is called *mahatma*. And a *mahatma*, Sri Krishna says, is difficult to find. A *mahatma* is the product of a long evolution. He is the ripe fruit of many births. Doing *yagna*, *tapas*, *dana* and *satsang*, through a series of births, by a collective *karma* of concentration and service (*seva*), he purifies his *antah karan*, his inner consciousness. And, one day, he becomes a *mahatma*, a *tatva gnani*. He is not scattered. His heart is not in multiplicity. He is one in understanding and will with the Lord.

20. But those whose wisdom hath been rent away by desires turn to other gods, resorting to various rites, constrained by their own natures.

21. Whatever form a devotee wishes to worship with faith,—that faith of his I make firm, unswerving.

22. Endowed with that faith, he seeks the worship of that (form), and from him obtains his desires; yet the benefits are decreed by Me alone.

23. But transient is the fruit that comes to those small-minded men. These, the worshippers of the gods, go to the gods. But they who worship Me,—My devotees,—come unto Me.



Sri Krishna acknowledges the value of the other three types as well. It is no sin to seek Krishna for (1) earthly objects, (2) alleviation of suffering, and (3) acquisition of knowledge. These three classes, indeed, include many of those who give deep *bhakti* to the Lord.

But in these three types "wisdom is rent away by desires (*kama*)," and these persons go to the "gods"! It is true that to such people, too, it is the Lord who gives the faith (*shraddha*) with which they worship their "gods," and the Lord decrees the benefits derived from the worship of the "gods." But these benefits, rewards, or fruits are temporary. For the worlds of the "gods," too, are perishable. Even *Brahmaloka* passes into *pralaya* : the very "gods" go! And they who enter the region of the "gods" are sure to return to re-birth.

But *gnanis*, being devoted to the Lord, "come unto Me,"—says Krishna. Not many such. One recalls the saying of Jesus :—"Strait is the gate and narrow the path, and few there be that find it."

24. Those devoid of understanding (*buddhi*) identify Me,—the unmanifest,—with a visible form. They know not My supreme Nature which is imperishable, most excellent.

Krishna is *avyakta* (invisible to the material world). And those who are devoid of *buddhi* (understanding) know not Krishna, His supreme Nature (*paramabhavam*), which is imperishable. Krishna is of Eternal Being, but the world is deluded, and identifies Krishna with a visible, perishable form. This delusion is due to the influence of *yoga maya* (creation illusion).

25. Enveloped by *yoga-maya*, I am not seen by all. This bewildered world knows Me not, the unborn, the imperishable.

26. I know, O Arjuna, the beings of the past, of the present, and those that are yet to come. But no one knoweth Me.

27. All beings are born in delusion, O Arjuna, overcome by the pairs of opposites which arise from attraction and repulsion.

The world knoweth not Krishna : yet Krishna knoweth the beings that are past and present and to come. Are they not all emanations of Him? Is He not the Invisible Life in all? But



the world knoweth not Krishna as Deathless! The world is deluded by *dwandas* (pairs of opposites), deluded by the influence of attraction and repulsion (*ichcha dvesha*).

28. But those men of pure deeds in whom sin hath come to an end, freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites, worship Me steadfast in their vows.

29. Those who, taking refuge in Me, strive for liberation from old age and death,—they know Brahman (the Eternal), they know *adhyatman* (the Self), and they know all about action (*karma*).

30. Those who know Me as the One that underlies the elements (*adhibhuta*), and the gods (*adhidaiva*), and all sacrifice (*adhiyagna*),—they, harmonised in mind, know Me even in the hour of death.

Krishna-knowers are so few, so very few. They are men of pure deeds, freed from sin. They are released from the *dwandas*, pairs of opposites. They take refuge in Me (*mamashritya*).

These blessed ones know (1) Brahman, the Eternal; (2) the Higher Self (*adhyatman*) ; (3) all action (*karma*). They, also, know Krishna as the *adhibhuta*, as the *adhidaiva*, and as the *adhiyagna*.

These blessed ones are the knowers, the *gnanis*. They truly worship Krishna.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this be the seventh chapter entitled :

*Gnana Vignana Yoga*

Or The Yoga of *Gnana* and *Vignana* (knowledge of *Nirguna Brahman* and *Saguna Brahman*).



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PATH OF LIGHT

*Arjuna Said :—*

1. What is Brahman (the Eternal)? What is the Self (*adhyatman*)? And what is action (*karma*). O Krishna? What is it that is said to underlie the elements (*adhibhuta*)? What is it that is said to underlie the gods (*adhidaiva*)?

2. Who underlies sacrifice (*adhiyagna*) in this body, and how, O Krishna? And how art Thou to be known by the self-controlled, at the time of death?

*The Blessed Lord said :—*

3. The Indestructible, the Supreme, is Brahman. *Svabhava* (one's own Self,—the *jivatman*, the Atman dwelling in the *jiva*, the Indwelling One) is the *adhyatman*. The creative force that brings beings into existence is called *karma*.

4. That which underlies all created things (*adhibhūta*) is the perishable nature. That which underlies the gods is the Cosmic Spirit. And, Arjuna, in this body I Myself (as the Inner Witness) am *adhiyagna*.

Chapter VII concludes with a reference to the knowers, the *gnanis*, the Krishna-knowers, the wise ones. They conquer death and get *gnana* (wisdom, knowledge). They know :— (1) Brahman; (2) *adhyatman*; (3) *karma*; (4) *adhiyagna*; (5) *adhibhuta*; (6) *adhidaiva*; and (7) *abhyasa yoga*.

These seven terms are here explained by Sri Krishna.



## (1) Brahman.

Brahman is *Parama Aksharam*, the Supreme and the Indestructible,—the One Eternal God. He transcends the Veda and *prakriti*. He is beyond matter.

(2) *Adhyatman*.

Where may one meet Brahman? Meet Him within thee,—in the Heart! He has entered within! The Self within, seated in the cavity of the heart, in the *jiva*, is called *adhyatman*, the "Within God," the In-soul, the Soul of souls.

Brahman is the Cosmic God, the "Father" : the *adhyatman* is the Within-God, the Indwelling Spirit.

In the heart contrite and lowly, in the mind upright and holy, in the *jivatman*, is His *svabhava*, a ray of His Light. The *adhyatman* is God's *svarupa*, the God-in-man, making man a shekina, a temple of the Lord. Ye are sons of God!

(3) *Karma*.

How cometh He within? By "emanation," a going forth from God. Emanation is *karma*,—an energy called *visarga*. Emanation is, also, *tyaga* (renunciation), throwing out.

God renounces Himself. How? Through *sankalpa* :—"I shall be many!"

This *adi-sankalpa* starts a *dhara*, a current, an *akhanda-dhara* : it becomes *karma-dhara*, *akhila karma-dhara*. Out of God goeth forth what causes all life to live.

This *karma* is the law of current, the law of causation and reincarnation. It regulates the successive lives of creatures on the earth (and in other planets), and their course of action. This *karma* is the law :—"As you sow, so shall you reap."

*Karma* is the energy of evolution. *Karma* causes the birth of beings (*bhutas*) and their evolution. *Karma* makes for progress through suffering : for progress is a gradual manifestation of the higher Self. So is man led on, step by step, to perfection. And perfection is attained through suffering, through sacrifice, *yagna*.

The secret of history is sacrificial lives. And the Inspirer of them all is the Great Spirit of Sacrifice called *adhiyagna*. Lose life to gain life,—is the teaching of Christ and other Masters.

(4) *Adhiyagna*.

*Adhiyagna* is the Lord of sacrifice. His body is the Cosmic Sacrifice : and from His sacrifice spring all creatures. The Lord dwelleth in each body, in the *sarva*, the All. He dwelleth therein as *divya Purusha*, as the *sanatan avyakta*, the Eternal Unseen, the divine Self, the Spirit of sacrifice! And all the bodies are the shrines which flame unto Him.

(5) *Adhibhuta*.

*Adhibhuta* is the *adhipati*,—the Lord,—of *bhutas*, elements..



beings, perishable objects. *Ishavasyam idam sarvam*. All that is, is a vesture of the Lord,—says the *Ishopanishad*. Nature is sacred : and the universe becomes a veritable temple.

(6) *Adhidaiva*.

*Adhidaiva* is the *adhipati*,—the presiding Power,—of the shining ones, *devas*. He is the *Purusha* of the gods, the *Prathama Purusha*. In the *devas* shineth He. He is the Lord of all the gods. He is the *Hiranyagarbha Purusha*, the Golden *Purusha*. He is the divine Man, the *Prajapati*, the *Sutra-atma*, the Great Breath of the Gods, the *Prana Purusha*! The gods are His *angas*, His limbs : He is the Creative Energy,—the divine Spirit,—of all the shining ones.

Arjuna's first six questions having been thus answered, Sri Krishna enters upon an answer to Question 7 :—What is the yoga which one may practise even in *antakala*,—the hour of death,—and attain the Supreme?

5. He who casting off the body, goeth forth, meditating upon Me alone, at the hour of death, he attaineth to My State (*madbhavam*). Doubt that not!

6. Whosoever, O Arjuna, abandoneth the body, thinking upon any being (*bhavam*), to that being (or object) only he goeth, ever absorbed in its thought.

Arjuna! he who departeth from the body thinking of Me alone,—saith the Lord,—he cometh forth to Me : he enters into My Being.

For this is the law : what a man looks for at the hour of his death, to that he goes. The soul is fashioned to its like. The thought of a man's last moment determines his destiny after death. A man is transformed to that state (*bhava*) which he bears in mind when casting off his body. He who, at the hour of death, is fixed in meditation on Krishna, on abandoning the body, the "shell," cometh to Krishna after death. But there are other destinations for those who, while quitting the body, think not of Krishna but of other beings, other objects. As a man thinketh in the hour of death, so he becometh after death.

Does he think of earthly objects,—of father, mother, brother, friend, wife, child, wealth, power, honour, gain? Then he cometh back to this Earth.

Does he think of Heaven and heavenly happiness? Then he goeth to Heaven.

Does he think only of the Supreme? Then to the Supreme he goeth after death.

This, then, is the law : whatever be the *bhava*, state, object,



being, a god, man, beast, bird, worm, tree, place, land, money, etc., whereof a man constantly thinks, doing its *abhyasa* in daily life, that *bhava* dominates his consciousness in the hour of his departure. And in that *bhava* is fashioned the picture of his life after death.

7. Therefore, at all times, think of Me and fight! When thy mind and understanding are set on Me, thou shalt surely come to Me.

At the hour of death, a man goes to what he thinketh upon. Such is the law. Therefore, Arjuna, (1) have Me in thy heart always; and (2) thinking upon Me only, fight!

(1) "Have Me in thy heart always!" For this life is uncertain : you never know when death may come. And if, you leave this body in an hour of absorption not in the Lord but in things of the Earth, then, indeed, will your earth-life have been in vain. But if, in the hour of death, your heart and mind are on Me fixed, then surely will you come to Me.

(2) And "thinking upon Me only, fight!" To Arjuna is the teaching given :—"Fight!" For Arjuna is a *kshatrya* : his *dharma*, *svadharma*, is to fight. The teaching, then, really is :—"And thinking upon Me only, do thy *dharma*, *svadharma*." For, by the doing of thy *svadharma*, thy *antah karan*,—the inner consciousness,—will be purified.

Think of the Lord and do thy duty. Yes,—these two may well be linked together. Does not the rope-dancer think of his feet and, also, of the pole he has to reach? Does not the motor-driver fix his thought on the steering-wheel and yet carry on conversation with his neighbour in the adjoining seat,—and even survey the road to guard the car against danger and collision?

8. He whose mind wanders not, but who continuously meditates, with his thought attuned by constant practice, he, O Arjuna, goeth to the *Paramam Purusham Divyam*, the Supreme Divine Person.

9. He meditates on Him as the Omniscient, the Ancient, the All-ruler, the Minuter than the minute, the Supporter of all, of form beyond the understanding of mortals, yet refulgent as the sun, and beyond all darkness.

10. At the time of death, with steadfast mind and devotion, by the power of yoga, holding his life-breath



in the centre, the space between the two eye-brows, he attains the Supreme Divine Person.

The yogi's way of attaining *saguna avyakta divyarupa* is described :—

The yogi controls the mind. His mind wanders not : with never-wavering will, the yogi knows no other God.

He meditates constantly on the *Paramam Purusham Divyam*,—the *Purusha*, Supreme Divine,—the Holiest, Perfect One! On Him the yogi meditates and meditates,—until he passeth into His *rupa* : he becomes God-absorbed.

The yogi meditates on the *Svarupa* of the *Supreme Purusha* : and the yogi's face, in the hour of death, becomes a mirror of God.

Concerning this *Svarupa*, the following may be noted :—

He is *kavi*, All-wise, *sarvagna*, the All-knowing One, the Omniscient, the Lord of Sage and Singer. He is *Puranam*, the Ancient of Days, the Eternal, Primeval, the *Adi* (Beginning) of all, the Ground of all. He is the *swami*, the All-ruler, *sarva shaktivan*, the Ordainer of all things. He is subtler than the subtle, the smallest of the small (more subtle than an atom). He is the Supporter, Sustainer of all, the Stay of all the world, the Upholder of all. He is of Form beyond comprehension, *achintyarupam*, of Form which passeth mortal knowing, beyond the comprehension of *manas* and *buddhi*. Yet is He refulgent as the sun, bright as the Sun of suns, ever-shining, glowing brighter than the sun's burning gold. Beyond the darkness is He, past all gloom, dispersing all darkness, the darkness of *avidya* or ignorance.

The yogi, with mind set fast and fixed in devotion (in truth and faith), draws his life-breath between calm brows. Such a yogi dies in happy peace, and in peace he passeth to the *Purusha* Divine. Such a yogi comes not into the wheel of birth and death,—except at his will.

11. That which the knowers of the Veda call the Imperishable (*aksharam*), that which the controlled and passion-free enter, that which the *brahmacharins* strive after and practise *brahmacharya* for,—that State I will declare to thee, in brief.

12. All the gates of the body (sense-organs) closed, the mind fixed in the heart, the life-breath fixed in the head, remaining steadfast in yogic concentration,



13. Reciting the one-syllabled "Om,"—the Brahman Eternal,—dwelling on Me (in My absolute aspect, that of Brahman), he who goeth forth, abandoning the body, he goeth to the Highest Goal.

The way of reaching *nirguna Parabrahman* is described :—

The Veda-knowers speak of *aksharam*, "Ultimate," the Indestructible. Into This enter the saints and ascetics, the passion-free : they tread a similiar path and attain *nirguna Brahman*.

They shut the gates of all the senses (five *gnana-indriyas* and five *karma-indriyas*),—the media of perception. They draw the senses inward. They do *pratyahara*.

They lock the mind,—desire,—in the heart, the heart's cave, *hridaya kamala* (between *nabhi* and *kantha*).

They centre the life-breath, vital airs, in the head : they do *dharana*.

They remain steadfast in yogic concentration.

And they recite (mentally) the one-syllabled emblem of Brahman,—Om.

They think upon Me in My absolute aspect (Krishna as Brahman).

They, too, abandoning the body, go on the highest Path (*paramamgatim*), the supreme State (*Brahma-nirvana*).

14. Arjuna, he who constantly thinketh upon Me with a mind that regardeth none else,—he, the yogi *nitya-yuktah* (ever harmonised, always absorbed in Me),—he easily attaineth Me.

15. Such perfect men,—great souls, *mahatmas*,—having come to Me, come not again to birth, the place of pain, impermanent : they have gone to the highest Bliss (the highest Perfection).

16. Arjuna, all the worlds, upto the *Brahmaloka*,—they appear and disappear; they come and go. But he who cometh unto Me,—he knoweth birth no more.

Is the yoga of *saguna Parameshvaram*,—the Supreme *Purusha* Divine,—difficult?

Is the yoga of *nirguna Parabrahman* still more difficult?

Then know the "easy Path" (*sulabhah*). Think of Me with undivided mind, none other gods regarding. Look ever to Me in faith and love. Be always absorbed in Me!



He who cometh to Me,—attaineth Me,—he becomes a *mahatma*, a great soul, a perfect man. And attaining Me, he falls not back to birth. He cometh not to this life which is the place of pain (*dukkha alayam*), which ends, being non-eternal (*ashashvatam*). He who attaineth Me takes the Imperishable Way, the Way of Blessedness, the Perfect Way.

For all the worlds, Arjuna, even Brahma's\* world, come and go. They roll back from death to life and life to death. And this life is unrest : for it is a wheel of birth and death. But he, who reacheth Me, he knoweth birth no more. For beyond time am I. But all the worlds are subject to time and so abide not. They are born : they die. They are born again, and back to death they roll. Even heaven,—*Brahma-loka*,—is transient. The very angels and gods are mortal. The worlds will, one day, cease to be. But I, Arjuna, abide for ever.

17. They who know (from realisation) that one day of Brahma is equal to a thousand *yugas* (ages), and that one night (of Brahma) is equal to another thousand *yugas*,—they alone know day and night (i.e., to them is known the truth about time).

18. From the unmanifested (Brahma's subtle body), all the manifested stream forth at the coming of (Brahma's) day. And at the coming of (his) night, they dissolve, merge, even in that called the unmanifest (the same subtle body of Brahma).

19. Arjuna, this multitude of beings goeth forth repeatedly (is born again and again), and is dissolved helplessly at the coming of (Brahma's) night. And again (this multitude of beings) streams forth, taking shape at dawn of day.

All the worlds, including the world of the gods, come and go, from death to life and life to death, again and again. For all these spheres are ruled by a cyclic law. It is the law of coming and going, the law of alternate phases. The one phase is named "Brahma's day," the other is named "Brahma's night."

Brahma's day is a thousand *yugas* (ages),—of evolution (*prakash*), manifestation (*vyakta*). Brahma's night is a thousand *yugas* (ages),—of involution (*pralaya*). To know

\*Brahmā is a god,—the first of the Hindu Trinity. Brahman is the Eternal.



(from realisation) Brahma's day, which is a thousand *yugas*, and Brahma's night, which is a thousand *yugas*, is, indeed, to know "day" and "night," as God doth know.

When the deep night of Brahma doth darken, all the worlds go into *pralaya*, falling back again into the *avyakta* (unmanifested state).—the *sukshama sarira* of Brahma,—whence they came. And when the dawn of Brahma doth break, out of the *avyakta* (the invisible) are brought anew the worlds into the visible of *prakriti* : and the vast company of living beings and non-living things ariseth to life, and evolution is astir! Again and yet again, are the worlds and beings (including gods) produced, brought into manifestation, and again and still again, are they dissolved at the coming of the night of Brahma!

In Brahma's day, Brahma awakes from his *sushupti*-state : then appears the *vyakta* out of the *avyakta*. In Brahma's night, Brahma goes from the state of awakening into the *sushupti* : then the *vyakta* goes into the *avyakta*. It is the state of *pralaya*. All creatures, separated from their *sthula sariras*, go into the *sukshama* state of *prakriti*.

Embodied beings go into dissolution (*pralaya*) and enter into evolution (*prakash*), for they are under the hold of *prakriti*.

The embodied beings are *vyaktis* : they come into birth, again and again. When the night is over and the day dawns, they wear the "forms" or "bodies," according to their *gunas* and *karmas*, and appear in the stream of evolution. They appear, again and again. There is, thus, no new creation : they enter into the *chakra* of evolution and they pass into *pralaya*, the *sukshama prakriti*, again and again and again.

There is no end to this process of re-birth and re-absorption, until there is the attainment of the Eternal God (*Parmeshvara* or *Parmatman*). They enter into this time-process, again and again, for they are subject to the influence of *prakriti*. Helpless are they, being held by *maya*,—each according to the *guna* and *karma* of his *svabhava* or *prakriti*. They enjoy and suffer according to the *gunas* born of *prakriti*. In this process are they for ages on account of *sanga* of *prakriti* (association with matter).

20. Verily, there exists another Unmanifested, higher than this unmanifested (Brahma's unmanifested), the Eternal Divine that is not destroyed when all beings are destroyed.

21. This Unmanifested is called the Imperishable. Him they speak of as the Highest Goal. They who



reach Him never return. That is My supreme abode.

22. He, the Highest *Purusha* (Spirit), O Arjuna, may be reached by unswerving devotion to Him alone. In Him all beings reside and by Him all this (the universe) is pervaded.

... Above this *avyakta* (unmanifested) of *prakriti* (nature), above the *sukshama sarira* of Brahma, another higher Unmanifested abides,—the Invisible of the Eternal Spirit, the Ultimate,—the Deeper Life Invisible.

... This Life,—the Deeper Life Invisible,—endures when all beings and all things are destroyed, plunged in *pralaya*,—the fated time of cosmic doom! This life, named the Unmanifested (*Avyakta*), the Infinite, the Uttermost, is the Final Goal.

... This Eternal Unmanifest is the supremely Divine Substance that perisheth never! This Divine Substance is the *Parama Divya Purusha*, the Supreme Shining Spirit, the *adhiyagna*. The same is called *Kavi* (Omniscient), *Purana* (the Ancient), the *Parama Purusha*, the *Avyakta Murti*.

... The first *avyakta* (of *prakriti*), the *sukshama sarira* of Brahma, is matter (*jada*), is destructible. The second *Avyakta* is Consciousness (*chetana*), Indestructible, All-seer and All-knower. The second *Avyakta* is the Eternal Lord of all. Even at the time of cosmic *pralaya*, when all things and beings go into the *sukshama sarira* of Brahma (*mula-prakriti*), even then the second *Avyakta*, the *Divya Purusha*, the Divine Spirit, liveth, established in His Glory!

That Life,—the Deeper Life Invisible,—the *Avyakta* of the Divine Spirit,—is Mine : and that Supreme Abode (*akshara, Avyakta*) is Mine. It is My Eternal Home.

... And they who arrive thither,—Krishna's Abode,—they return not to this abode of birth and death.

... And they arrive by *ananya-bhakti*, by love and faith which wander not. By devotion they come to Me in whom dwell all beings (*antargata sthiti*), and who pervading all hath spread the universe in space. By devotion they come to Me and enter into Perfect Peace.

23. Now I shall declare to thee, O Arjuna, the times at which, if the yogis depart, they come not back, and at which they depart only to return.

24. Fire, light, day-time, bright fortnight, the six months when the sun moves north,—departing then, the men who know the Eternal (Brahman) go to the Eternal.



25. Smoke, night-time, so also the dark fortnight, the six months when the sun moves south,—departing then, the yogi obtains the lunar light and returns.

26. Light and darkness,—these are the world's everlasting paths. By the one, a man goeth who returneth not; by the other goeth he who returneth again.

27. These (two) paths the yogi knows, and so is never perplexed. Therefore, O Arjuna, be firm in yoga,—always.

28. Having known all this, the yogi passes beyond all merit that comes from the study of the Vedas, from sacrifices (*yagna*), from austerities (*tapas*) and holy gifts (*dana*), and goeth to the Supreme Eternal State (of Peace and Blessedness).

There are two paths :—(1) the path of light and liberation; and (2) the path of bondage and return to re-birth.

The first path leads to the abode of Brahman, the abode of Krishna. Reaching the abode of Krishna, none returneth. It is the *parama dhama*,—the Supreme Abode,—of the Lord. Whoso reaches this *dhama* beholds the *saguna Paramatman sakshatkar*, and is absorbed in the *svarupa* of *Bhagavan*. This *dhama*, abode, is also named *nitya dhama*, *satya loka*, *saketa loka*, *go loka*, *vaikuntha loka*, and *Brahman loka*. This *Brahman loka* is not *Brahma's loka* (of *sloka* 16), from which the *jiva* returneth to the cycle of births and deaths.

As distinguished from this path of light and liberation is another path, of bondage and return to re-birth. In this path travel the *sakami* (acting with a desire for fruit); and they cross the *pitriloka* (the abode of ancestors), attain the *chandra loka*,—and get *divya deva sarira*, the lustre of the moon, and enter into Heaven. There they enjoy the fruits of their *shubha karmas* (good deeds) and then return to this mortal world. In the same path travel the *yogabhrashta*.

Knowing thus these two paths, O Arjuna, the yogi is nowise perplexed : the yogi is not deluded by *moha*. So be thou, Arjuna! Be *yoga-yukta*, established in yoga,—and so rise above *moha*. The yogi knowing this,—the secret of the paths,—attains wisdom, and so thinks not of the fruits of good deeds,—as mentioned in the Vedas, viz. (1) sacrifices or prayers, *yagnas*, (2) austerity or *tapas*, and (3) gifts or *dana*.



Richer, indeed, is wisdom than the study of the Vedas : and greater is wisdom than gifts : and better is wisdom than prayer or fast. The yogi knoweth wisdom and attains the Supreme Eternal State,—the Perfect Primeval Abode,—the Shining Eternal *Purusha*.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this be the eighth chapter entitled:

*Aksharabrahman Yoga*

Or The Yoga of the Imperishable Absolute.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE SUPREME MYSTERY

*The Blessed Lord Said :—*

1. To thee, the uncarping, shall I now declare this profoundest Secret, *gnana* with *vignana* combined (knowledge of *Nirguna* Brahman,—the Transcendental Being,—with the knowledge or Love divine of *Sakara* Brahman,—the Eternal in manifestation). Knowing this, thou shalt be freed from evil (the bondage of *sansara*).

Krishna says unto Arjuna :—"Now I shall tell thee the most secret truth." This "secret truth" is regarding Krishna's Transcendental Being (the divine Mystery of the Lord) and Love divine. And the Lord reveals the "secret truth" unto Arjuna, for Arjuna has answered the test. Arjuna has been uncarping, free from malice. Arjuna is not one of those who take delight in the defects of others:

The wisdom of the Gita, we read in Chapter XVIII, is not to be revealed to a carping critic. Such a man is a quibbler, a word-juggler, a debator of terms, a dealer in shadows, a sophist. Not unto him may Truth be told.

Arjuna has been a true disciple. He has questioned, but in his questioning is aspiration. He has been a seeker, not a quibbler. His heart rejects not. To Arjuna, therefore, does the Master reveal the esoteric knowledge of *bhakti*, knowing which a man is freed, for ever, from the evils of the "three qualities," which are an impediment to pure devotion.

What is this esoteric knowledge? This "profoundest Secret," Sri Krishna says, is "*gnana* with *vignana* combined." What is *gnana*? And what is *vignana*? What is the difference between the two?

*Gnana* is knowledge of *Nirguna* Brahman or the Absolute.



Knowledge or worship of *Nirguna* Brahman is possible to a few. In recent years, appeared Rishi Dayanand,—God's gift to this broken nation. And Rishi Dayanand spoke of worship of *Nirguna* Brahman. Rishi Dayanand was a *bal-brahmachari*, a seer of singular purity and singular aspiration. How many Dayanands have appeared in a century! To the majority of us, the Absolute, the *Paramatman*, is an "unknown God." The *Nirguna* Brahman : who knoweth? The Absolute Reality : who can comprehend? "Who dare name His Name?" asks Goethe. Rightly doth a Rishi say in an Upanishad that "our words and our minds attain Him not : they return failing to know Him." The *Nirguna* Brahman is *Avyakta*, the Unmanifest.

The majority of us cry for a "manifest God," for *Sakara* Brahman. *Vignana* is knowledge or worship of *Sakara* Brahman. The great sage, Dattatraya, says that *Nirguna* worship is for him who is an *asarira*; and he defines an *asarira* as "one who transcends *dwandas* (pairs of opposites), transcends his body and senses, his mind and *buddhi*, and is so unaffected by pleasure or pain that, even if placed on the funeral pyre, he feels no pain!" The majority of us fail to rise to such heights. What appeals to us is *Sakara* Brahman, i. e., "God made manifest." Electricity, though omnipresent, is invisible to us. But we behold it in a bulb : there we see electricity as a shining light. The Great Ones of humanity are the "bulbs" of Brahman. They are, in the words of a Sufi singer, "lanterns where God's light shines through." I confess I worship at the shrine of the Great Ones. They make history,—not, as Marx would have us believe, prices and wages and votes and assemblies.

Krishna says that He is the central Light of the world's great men and heroes. He is the *Purusha Uttama*, the Supreme Person of all history. In Him the *Nirguna* Brahman is made manifest, the Great Reality is revealed. He is the Supreme Revelation.

*Gnana*, then, is truth or knowledge of the Absolute. *Gnana* is worship of or meditation on the *avyakta*, the Unmanifest. This is difficult for most of us. *Vignana* is knowledge of or meditation on *vyakta*, the *Sakara* Brahman. Here you meditate on Him not as Absolute but on one of His forms.

These forms are :—

(1) *Vishvarupa*, cosmic forms, Nature. You may meditate on the sun or river, on mountain or flower or bird or cow or any of the cosmic forms.

(2) Humanity. Here you meditate on a hero, a *bhakta*, a teacher or saint. "All worship is by symbols," said Carlyle. And symbolatry is not idolatry.



Or you worship Him in the poor and lowly. They are His *rupas*. St. Francis beheld his Master in the leper. Saints have seen the poor as "veils" of the Lord. And "beneath the veils He hides," said the Sufi poet, Jami.

(3) *Avataras*. In Them you talk to Him, you walk with Him.

And Krishna reveals the Secret of Himself to Arjuna, saying:— "I am He." Krishna claims to be *Purushottama*, the Divine Man.

And meditating on the Krishna-Avatara, you may think of the Lord as Father (did not Krishna guard Draupadi?) or as Mother (how tenderly Krishna loved the *gopis*!) or as Friend (how Krishna wept for His friend, Sudama!) or as Spouse of the soul or as Child (how Krishna played with the *gopis*.)

2. This *raja-vidya* (sovereign science), *raja-guhyam* (sovereign secret) purifies and is precious. It shines with splendour; it is in harmony with *dharma* or duty; it is easy to practise, and it is imperishable.

It is called *raja-vidya*, for it is esoteric, not sold in the "school of sophists," but taught to them that are "princes" among men,—taught to those who aspire to be kings of the mind, who rise above desire to faith and reverence (*shraddha*).

Concerning this *raja-vidya* (sovereign science or esoteric wisdom), until the Lord tell, who may know? What is God? Only God knows. We know as He reveals. He puts away the veil, *maya*: He does it as an act of grace, *kripa*. In grace the Lord speaks to Arjuna further of the Mystery and the Wisdom which but to know setteth free from all ills.

This *raja-vidya*, the Lord saith, is holy: it is the great purifier of life (*pavitram*). It purifies the body and mind. It is true the Name of the Lord, the Name of Krishna, purifies the senses.

It is precious (*uttamam*). Nothing is more precious: nothing is superior. It is the "pearl of great price" for which great ones have sold all they had. They have renounced all for the sake of wisdom or *gnana*.

It is *pratyakshavagamam*, i. e., this wisdom is apprehended directly by immediate consciousness. Illumination dawns on one who worships the Incarnate One with this knowledge. It shines with inmost splendour.

It is the climax of all religion and is consistent with the duties required by *ashramas* and *varnas*. This wisdom is consistent with the right performance of duty,—is in harmony with the Cosmic Law.



It is plain to see and easy to put into practice (*susukham kartum*). It is easy to walk by. Simplicity is a mark of wisdom. It is imperishable (*avyavam*). The world and its things change and pass away, but wisdom changeth not.

3. Men who have no faith in this knowledge, O Arjuna, not attaining to Me, return to the paths of this world of death.

This wisdom liberates from the triple qualities of *maya*. They who attain to this wisdom come not back into birth and death. They cross this *mrityu-sansara* : they enter, by His Grace, into the Krishna Abode. And grace cometh through reverence and faith (*shraddha*). Faith is the fundamental basis of this knowledge,—faith in Me, says Krishna. They who fail in faith and will not accept this knowledge,—they do not win release but sink anew into the flesh and wander in the whirlpool of this world,—the pool of death.

4. By Me the whole universe is pervaded in My unmanifest aspect. All beings have root in Me, but I am not rooted in them.

5. And (yet) the beings have no root in Me. Behold My divine mystery. My Self creates all, sustaineth all, yet is not rooted in them.

Krishna pervades the world, not in embodied form, but in His unmanifest aspect, as Brahman. All beings are rooted in Me, dwell in Me, says Krishna, but I am not rooted in them. For I transcend the universe. I transcend both *pralaya* (dissolution) and *prakash* (manifestation or evolution). I have spun the web of life : and all dwell in Me. I am their support : but they support Me not. They depend on Me : I do not depend on them. I create and sustain them, yet am I beyond creation. This is the divine mystery (*yogam aishvaram*). The Lord creates all and sustains all, yet dwells outside of all. God, the Eternal, is, also, the universal Atman pervading the whole universe. So all things and all objects, the gods and men, the sun and stars, the animals and plants, the minerals, atoms, electrons, all are a part of the divine Life. All are come out of God, His thought, *sankalpa*, the divine Idea, God's *yoga-maya*, His divine *shakti*. So all creatures and all things dwell in God. The universe, then, has a value. It is rooted in God.

6. As the mighty wind, moving everywhere, ever



dwells in the etheric space (*akasha*), even so, know thou, that all beings rest in Me.

As the winds move in space but are not space, so all beings are in Krishna but are not Krishna. As things move in a dream but do not bind or chain the man who dreams, so all beings, creatures and things, move in Krishna, in Krishna's Idea, but do not bind or enchain Krishna.

7. At the close of a *kalpa* (world-age), O Arjuna, all beings return into My nature (*prakriti*). And at the beginning of the (next) *kalpa*, I send them forth.

8. Through My nature, I send forth, again and again, all this multitude of beings which are helpless, being under the control of nature (*prakriti*).

The beings are of *maya*, of *prakriti*. Out of *prakriti* they come in a period of manifestation (evolution), and into *prakriti* they go at the end of each *kalpa*, world-age. And at the beginning of a new world-age, they come forth out of *prakriti* into form again.

The *prakriti*, over which Krishna presides, brings forth the world, from time to time; and again dissolves it into the unmanifest. This evolution and involution of forms is Krishna's *maya* and has no power to bind Him. This work of *prakriti* proceeds by laws of nature. This work of producing "multitude of beings" does not bind Krishna. He observes all as one detached from these works. Unattached to actions is Krishna, for He seeks no reward.

9. These actions, O Arjuna, enchain Me not. For I sit apart from them, unattached in those actions.

10. Thus, supervised by Me, doth nature send forth all things, moving and unmoving; and so, O Arjuna, the world revolves.

Thus Krishna, as Supervisor, Governor, holds the control of nature (*prakriti*), pervading all creatures. Yet, Krishna Himself is not identical with His creatures. In His own eternal divine Glory Krishna sitteth, unattached, the Support of all, yet fixed in naught, producing the animate and inanimate universe, the primal Fount of all. Thus the worlds go on. And I am free, says Krishna, unattached, unchained, though by help of *prakriti*, I send forth the realm of visible things.



God is One : and the One is manifested as the many. The One is the Eternal, the Imperishable, the Absolute Brahman, that never goes into *pralaya* (dissolution). The gods,—Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and others,—the men, the animals, the plants, the minerals, all beings, all the worlds and planets, all the suns and stars, go into *pralaya*. The whole drama of matter, life and consciousness, the drama of evolution goes into disappearance. But the Eternal abides. And the *Purushottama*, the Incarnate Lord, Sri Krishna,—He abides and goeth not into dissolution.

11. (Seeing Me) clad in human form, the foolish take no heed of Me, not knowing My higher nature (that rules) as the sovereign Lord of all beings.

This is the Eternal Secret. God is one. The One is *avyakta* (unmanifest). And the *avyakta*, by *yoga-maya*, is made manifest as the Incarnate Lord, the *Purushottama*, the *Parama Purusha*, the Man Supreme. And this is Sri Krishna. But the deluded, seeing Him clad in human body, know not that He is the Lord of Life and of its plan.

Alas ! many are deluded : they are the foolish ones (*mudha*). They see Krishna clad in ordinary human form, and they fail to recognise Him, His higher Being (*param bhavam*). His supreme Form as the sovereign Lord of all (*bhuta maheshvaram*).

Why are they deluded? They come under the influence of *rakshasas* and *asuras* (fiends and demons). They are enemies of God and man.

12. Their hopes are vain, their deeds are vain, their knowledge vain. Devoid of sense, they partake of the deceitful nature of demons and fiends.

13. But the great souls (*mahatmas*), O Arjuna, partaking of My divine nature, worship Me with a mind that wanders not. They know that I am the Imperishable source of all beings.

There is *mohini prakriti*, deceitful nature : and there is *daivi prakriti*, divine nature. They who partake of the first, walk the way of desires, the way of sin and stain, the brutal way which fiends and demons take. But the *mahatmas*, the great souls, who partake of Krishna's divine nature, worship the Lord with unwavering mind and know Him as being one with the supreme,—the Imperishable Source of all beings.



14. They magnify Me always ; strenuous and steadfast in their vows, they do homage to Me ; ever self-controlled, they worship Me with reverent love.

15. Others, also, sacrificing with the sacrifice of wisdom, worship Me, as the one, as the distinct, and as the many, (because they see Me) everywhere present.

In the worship the *mahatmas* offer to Krishna, knowledge (*gnana*) predominates. They give unto Krishna *gnana yagna*, the sacrifice of wisdom.

And they fix their minds on the mystery of Krishna as One and, again, on His mystery as manifold,—the One Divine Face on all sides.

The *mahatmas* know Krishna as the Source of life, as one with all beings and, at the same time, free from contact with any. Krishna's aspects are innumerable. Unto Krishna, the *mahatmas* bring the offering of truth (*gnana*) and they, also, worship Krishna as diverse-faced.

16. I am the worship, I am the sacrifice, I am the oblation to the manes. I am the healing herb, I am the *mantra*, I am the ghee, I am the fire, and I am the burnt-offering.

Krishna proceeds to describe Himself. Krishna is the cosmic sacrifice. He is in every form, every part, every act of sacrifice (*yagna*).

And they, who worship the Veda and the gods, unconsciously worship Krishna and sacrifice to Krishna.

17. I am the father of this world, the mother, the supporter and the grandsire. I am the holy one to be known. I am Om, and also the Rig, the Sama and the Yajur (Vedas).

Krishna is the pure object of knowledge, the word of Power (Om) in the Vedas. Krishna is the essence of Vedic wisdom, the end of learning.

18. (I am) the way, the supporter, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge and the friend. (I am) the origin and the dissolution, the foundation, the treasure-house, and the deathless seed.



Krishna is the Way and the Goal of the world. He is the Path. He is the Master. He is the Sustainer, He is the Witness. He watches every action. He is the Abode, the Refuge. He is the Friend, the Lover. He is the Home. He is the Origin, the Fountain and the Sea of life. He is the Dissolution or End. He is the Base or Foundation. He is the Treasure of worlds. And He is the Imperishable Seed, the Seed of life that never dies.

19. I give heat. I withhold and send forth the rain. I am immortality and also death. I am what seems (*asat*) and what eternal is (*sat*).

Krishna controls the elements. He is *sat*, i. e., Being, the Unmanifested Cause. He is, also, *asat*, i. e., all that is not, the passing. Krishna, then, is the Causation of all phenomena, and Krishna is the Effect.

20. The knowers of the three Vedas, who drink the soma juice and are purified from sin, worshipping Me with sacrifice, pray for the way to *svarga* (the heaven-world). Having reached the holy world of Indra (the lord of heaven), they enjoy in heaven the divine pleasures of the gods.

They who worship according to Vedic rites and drink the soma juice (the sacred sacrament), they pray,—unconsciously,—to Krishna for heaven. And Krishna grants their petition. And they attain the celestial realm of Indra. They feast upon heavenly food (*devabhogan*) of gods.

21. Having enjoyed the vast world of heaven, when their merit is exhausted, they come back to this world of death. Thus following the words of the three Vedas and desirous of enjoyments, they obtain the passing (what is subject to birth and death).

Fulfilling the Vedic ritual, they go to heaven, but they stay there for a period : they return to the world of mortal men, when their merit is spent. They obtain the transitory. Having enjoyed the glorious realm of the gods, for a period, they sink back into this mortal world,—the world of death,—as soon as their stock of merit is exhausted. They do not escape the wheel of birth and death. These heavenly enjoyments, too, come and go.

22. But those who worship Me and meditate on



Me alone, to them who are self-controlled, I give what they have not and hold secure whatever they have.

Only to His *bhaktas* does Krishna grant the power to win and hold that knowledge which shall lead them to His own Being. To them who worship Krishna alone, Krishna brings full security. He guards their welfare : He gives them the full assurance of blessedness : He gives them eternal happiness.

23. Even the devotees of other gods who, in faith, worship them (the gods),—they also worship Me, O Arjuna, though not in the right way.

The hearts which worship other gods in simple faith, they also worship Krishna. Their prayers rise to the Lord, though they are not aware of Him.

The Gita keeps clear of credalism and sectarianism.

24. For I am the Enjoyer and Lord of every sacrifice. But these men do not know Me in My true nature, and so they fall (into the wheel of birth and death again).

They who worship other gods worship Krishna in ignorance and, on this account, not truly understanding Him, they enjoy a transitory heavenly happiness, and then descend to this mortal world and enter into the cycle of birth and death.

All offerings really come to Krishna : for He is the Lord of all sacrifices. But the worshippers of the gods do not know Krishna, as He is : so they climb but fall. They return to the world of men.

25. Who worship the gods go to the gods; who worship manes go to the manes; who worship the lower spirits (*bhutas*) go to the lower spirits; but My worshippers come unto Me.

The worshippers of (1) the *devas* (gods), and (2) the *pitris* (ancestors), and (3) the *bhutas* (elementals, ghosts) meet with the reward they seek. They go to their respective spheres. But Krishna's worshippers and lovers come unto Krishna : they enter the Eternal Abode.

26. He who offereth to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, that gift of love I accept (as offering) of the pure of heart.



The lowliest may approach Krishna. The simplest offering is acceptable, provided it is made with love and earnestness.

The little way is the Gita's way to perfect life. *Patram, pushpam, phalam, toyam*, a leaf, a flower, a fruit, a little water,—no matter how poor or simple the thing, it is acceptable to Krishna, provided it comes from an earnest soul with a sincere longing. The Lord asks not for great things. Little things are you asked to give Him. In little things, remember Him each day,—in little moments, in trifles. These reflect Eternity.

If you give the little ones, the broken ones, the thirsty ones, the neglected ones, the world's disinherited ones, the poor ones in broken cottages, little cups of cold water,—kind words, little gifts of love,—the Lord blesseth you. Sow little seeds of love and you will reap a rich destiny. Kindle a little candle each day and your life will shine. Be a little stone in the temple of service. Offer little grains of love to hungry hearts. Chant to the Lord little hymns, as chants the little bird his song of praise. Be a little one of the Lord!

27. Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerities thou dost practise,—let it all be done, O Arjuna, as an offering unto Me.

Be dedicated to the service of God. Consecrate to Him all your acts. Let all the common tasks of daily life be thy worship to God : let them be an expression of your love for God.

The way of works, of activities,—*karma marga*,—starts with duty and ends on a note of adoration of the Eternal, of worship of the Lord. Dedicated work is worship.

Remember this, O Arjuna, eating or sacrificing, giving gifts, praying or fasting,—let it all be done for Me as Mine! Not your words but your deeds,—dedicated to Him,—are acceptable to the Lord.

Words are easy. It is the doing that is difficult : and the doing is essential. Do everything as dedicated to Him. Clever talking will not take you a single step forward. So the Rishi says in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* :—Let the Brahmin, who is wise, discerning Him, the Self, practise wisdom,—show forth the beauty of wisdom in action.

So in the last *adhyaya* (18th), Krishna says to Arjuna :—“Reflect well on what hath been told thee, then act,—as it seemeth best to thee.”

Do everything not to please men but to be blessed by the Lord. “Take heed,” says Jesus, “that you do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them.” The secret of



the true life, the holy life, is known to him who acts not for the purpose of gain or fame, but to reflect the life divine.

To walk this way is to be like a little child who thinks only of his mother. Think only of thy Mother Divine. So the teaching is given in the holy books of Tibet :—"Be not distracted!" And the Rishi of the Upanishad says :—"Let a Brahmin turn away from learning and aspire to live as a child!"

28. So shalt thou be freed from the bonds of action, from good and evil fruits (of deeds). With thy mind firmly set on the way of renunciation, thou shalt be free and come to Me.

29. I am the same to all beings. To Me there is none hateful nor dear. But those who worship Me with devotion, they are in Me, and I also (am) in them.

God condemns none : and He favours none. The same is He to all that live. But those who worship Him with faith and love,—they come to Him. They who give their love to Him win His love.

In Krishna there is no partiality. He knows not hatred nor favour. Fire does not choose on whom to shed its warmth. He who draws near to fire is warmed, others will be cold. The sun's light is reflected in a clean mirror, but not in a dirty one. So Krishna's warmth is felt by His *bhakta* : Krishna's light is reflected by His devotee.

30. Even if a man, deep-sunk in sin, worships Me with single heart, he, too, must be reckoned as righteous, for he hath rightly resolved.

In sin, too, is the Sinless One : the Lord pursues us. And when the sinner turns to God with single heart, and resolves to sin no more, he grows in spiritual strength and vision. He, too, becomes holy.

31. And he shall soon become righteous and reach everlasting peace. O Arjuna, know thou for certain that My devotee perisheth never.

He who loveth the Lord is never lost. A man may be a sinner : but if he has devotion, he becomes a saint, for his heart is right. Internal revolution leads the sinner to righteousness. He becomes dutiful : he goeth to the Peace Imperishable.



32. For those who take refuge in Me, O Arjuna, though they be born of the womb of sin, though they be women or *vaishyas* (tradesmen) or even *sudras* (serfs), they also reach the highest goal.

Through *bhakti*, taking sanctuary in Krishna, all men come unto Krishna,—all, not only Brahmins and *kshatriyas* but, also, *vaishyas* and *sudras*, not only men but also women, not only the *raja-rishis* (royal sages) but also they "born of the womb of sin."

Krishna belongs to all. His gospel of love is open to all men and women, all seekers, all aspirants, who turn to Him, who burn candles to Him on the temple-altars of their hearts.

33. How much more, then, holy Brahmins and devoted royal saints! Having come to this fleeting, joyless world, do thou worship Me.

34. Fix thy mind on Me; be devoted to Me; worship Me; bow down to Me. Thus having controlled thyself, and making Me thy goal supreme, thou shalt come unto Me.

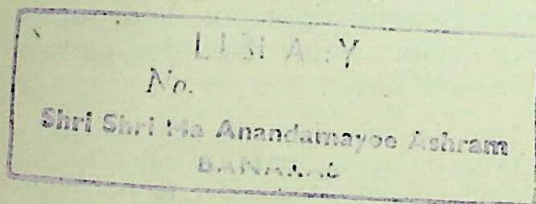
Unto Arjuna does Krishna appeal :—"Arjuna, do not forget that you are born in this world which is fleeting and joyless. Therefore do thou worship Me!"

"Thou shalt come unto Me!" saith the Lord. By giving your whole heart to Krishna, by loving and adoring Him, worshipping Him always, and bowing to Him in reverence, you will find Him,—the Lord of your life and destiny.

In the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this be the ninth chapter entitled :

*Rajavidya Rajaguhya Yoga*

Or The Yoga of Sovereign Science and Sovereign Secret.





## SPACE—DONORS

We feel grateful to the following who have donated towards the publication of this book. May they be richly blessed!

1. Dr. Prem's Homoeopathic Clinic,  
2394, East Street, Poona-1.
2. M/s. Bright Brothers Private Limited,  
156-A, Tardeo Road, Bombay-34.
3. M/s. V. D. Japan Corporation,  
*Exporters and Manufacturers' Representatives,*  
Semba P. O. Box—45, Osaka (Japan).
4. M/s. L. K. Talreja & Co.,  
Gandhi Mansion, Bombay-1.
5. M/s. Watumull Industries Pvt. Ltd.,  
*Manufacturers of Fleet Ball-Point Pens & Refills,*  
"Delstar," 9-9A, Hughes Road, Bombay-26.
6. Mrs. Kundi M. Makhijani,  
51/3, Nanik Nivas, B-Desai Road, Bombay-26.
7. M/s. Metalreeds & Mill Store Manufacturers,  
and M/s. Typhoon Blower Co.,  
*(Prop. Girdharilal N. Dusija),* 19, Hamam  
St., Bombay Mutual Chambers, Fort, Bombay.
8. Shri Bhagwandas Basarmal Bhojwani,  
*(In sacred memory of his dear Mother, Hejibai  
Basarmal Bhojwani, and dear father, Basarmal  
Shewaram Bhojwani)*
9. M/s. J. Kundan & Company,  
103, Princess Street, P. O. Box 2467, Bombay-2.
10. Kalyan Singh Bajaj of Avtrar Singh & Co. Pvt. Ltd.,  
*(In sacred memory of Beloved father, Hardayal Singh)*
11. A Brother, Bombay.
12. Shri Bulchand Pesumal Jhangiani,  
790, Bhawani Peth, Poona-2.  
*(In sacred memory of his dear departed wife, Smt.  
Papibai Bulchand Jhangiani).* God bless her Soul!
13. M/s. East India Paper Company,  
5-A/5-B, Court Chambers, 35, New Marine Lines,  
Bombay—20BR.
14. Karamchand Jamnadas & Sons, Charitable Trust.
15. M/s. Motilal Deepchand, Neelkant Bldg., Bombay.
16. M/s. Vishindas Bodaram, Bombay-Delhi.



17. M/s. Gobindram Basharam, Gandhi Gali, Shop No. 268, Swadeshi Market, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay-2.
18. M/s. India Saree Museum, 280, Lokmanaya Tilak Road, Bombay-2.
19. Shri N. T. Shaharji, C/o L. R. Trading Co., Navsari Chambers, Outram Road, Bombay-1.
20. M/s. Naraindas Lakhmichand, Bankers and Commission Agents, Mahendra-Mansion, 'B' Block, 3rd Floor, 389—91, Girgaum Road, Bombay-2.
21. M/s. Twandsren Electronics and Engineering Service, Sind Chambers, Colaba Cause Way, Colaba, Bombay-5.
22. M/s. Kishco Cutlery Mfg. Co., 54-56 Empire Bldg., 138 D. N. Road, P. O. Box 1063, Bombay-1.
23. M/s. Keshawdas Lakhmichand, Bankers, 223/25, Zaveri Bazar, Bombay-2.
24. M/s. Aildas Gordhandas, Jaihind Bldg. No. 1, 1st Floor, Near Kabutar Khana, Bholeshwar, Bombay-2. (*In sacred memory of their dear father, Shri Aildas Jiwandas*)
25. Shri Ramchand Doulatram, "Nana Sunkersett Smruti", No. 21, 2nd Floor, 380/82, Jagannath Sunker Sett Road, Bombay-2.
26. M/s. Krishna Steel Industries Private Ltd., *Manufacturers of Best Wire Rods*, Vaswani Mansion, Dinshaw Vachha Road, Bombay-1.
27. A Well-wisher, Bombay.
28. Shri Motiram Harkishinlal, 223, Cutlery Bazar, Bombay-3. *Carvan-Doctor-Pens Ball Pens, & Stationery Novelties.*
29. Dr. M. M. Mirani, Ministry of Health, Ghana (W. Africa).
30. M/s. The Nanikram Sobhraj Mills Private Ltd., Ahmedabad.
31. M/s. Lalvani Brothers, *Largest wholesale House in India for Books*, 210 D. Naoraji Road, Bombay-1.
32. Shri U. A. Thadani, 12, Stavelley Road, Poona.
33. M/s. Sippy Organisation, 3-G, Naaz Buildings, Lamington Road, Bombay-7.
34. Idnani Family, (*In sacred memory of Shri Bulchand Bagomal Idnani*)
35. M/s. Pohoomal Kewalram Sons, *Export and Import*, Gandhi Mansion, II Floor, New Silk Bazar, P. O. Box 2780, Bombay-2.



36. M/s. Welworth, Peddar Road, Bombay-26.
37. M/s. Mirex Heat Transfer Pvt. Ltd.,  
Delstar, 9-9A, Hughes Road, Bombay-26 W. B.
38. In sacred memory of Diwan Naraindas B.  
Gidwani and Moti N. Gidwani.
39. M/s. Kamani Oil Mills, 365, Katha Bazar, Bombay-9
40. Trilok with Champa.
41. M/s. EES Brothers, Picket Road, Bombay-2.
42. M/s. Western Manufacturing Co. (Bombay) Pvt. Ltd.,  
B, 11, Commerce Centre, Tardeo Road, Bombay-34.
43. Shri Hiro D. Mahtani,  
91, Tenerife, Little Gibbs Road, Bombay-6.
44. Mrs. Samtani K. R.,  
Mathabhoy Mansion, Karve Road, Bombay-20.
45. Shri K. Sippy,  
17, B, Lalit, Woode House Road, Bombay-1.
46. Sai-Nath Cotton Co.,  
17, B, Lalit, Woode House Road, Bombay-1.
47. M/s. National Industrial Mfg. Co.,  
"Nana Sunker Sett Smruti," Office No. 40, 3rd Floor,  
380/82 J. Sunkersett Road, Girgaum, Bombay-2.
48. M/s. Electro Magnetic Controls Co.,  
3rd Floor, Block-7, Prabhadevi Industrial Estate, 402,  
Cadell Road, Prabhadevi, Bombay-25.
49. A Sister, Poona.
50. M/s. Zeta Narrow Fabrics,  
*Manufacturers of : Rigid and Elastic Ropes,*  
14-C, Kurla Industrial Estate, Ghatkopar, Bombay-77.
51. Western Mechanical Industries Pvt. Ltd.,  
Industry Manor, Opp. Bengal Chemicals, Post Box  
7002, Worli, Bombay-25 D. D.
52. M/s. Motumal and Company,  
35, Broach Street, Bombay-9. Tele : 325348.
53. M/s. Kotecha & Co.,  
231 Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Fort, Bombay.
54. M/s. Sha Maganlal Babulal & Bros.,  
*Timber Merchant & General Contractor,*  
47, New Timber Market, Poona-2.
55. M/s. C. Ambalal & Co.,  
*(Govt. Military & P. W. D. Contractors and Suppliers,  
Dealers in iron and steel paints, S.W., C. F., & G. I.  
Pipes, Hardware, Sanitary ware Fittings, etc.)*  
195, Raviwar Peth, (New 927 Budhwar Peth), Poona-2.



56. Gaylord Restaurant,  
May fair Bldg., Churchgate, Bombay-1.
57. Shri N. L. Mirchandani, Hindustan Levers, Bombay-1.
58. M/s. Charu Construction, Bombay.
59. M/s. Jawahar Traders,  
747/16 Agarwal Colony, Poona-2.
60. M/s. Lachmibai Mirpuri, (*In loving memory of her husband, Shri Jawaharmal R. Mirpuri*).
61. M/s. Royal Traders, East Street, Poona-1.  
(*In sacred memory of Late Diwan Jethmal M. Thadaney and Late Mrs. Devibai Jethmal Thadaney*).
62. Union Bank of India,  
66/80, Apollo Street, Fort, Bombay.  
Poona City Branch :—189, Raviwar Peth, Poona-2.  
Poona Camp Branch :—284, Mahatma Gandhi Road.  
Poona Tilak Road Branch :—Udyog Bhavan, Tilak Road.  
Poona Kasarwadi Branch :—414, Kasarwadi, Pimpri.
63. Shri Kishinchand G. Bhagwan,  
Naraain Nivas, Padamjee Park, Poona-2.
64. Shri K. H. Chandwani, *Income-Tax and Sales-Tax Practitioner*, 334, Sachapir Street, Poona-1.
65. M/s. Emson Engineering Corporation,  
142, Rashtrapathi Road, Secunderabad (A. P.).
66. M/s. Amar Construction,  
8, Deccan Mansion, Yeroda, Poona-6.
67. M/s. Khushaldas Otanmal, Engineers and  
Contractors, 1194/14 A, Shivaji Nagar, Poona-5.  
(Tele : No. 57555).
68. M/s. Bharat Trading Corporation,  
12, Staveley Road, Poona-1.
69. M/s. Kishore Construction Co.,  
31, Connaught House, Poona-1.
70. Shri Bhagwan Datwani, J. B. Trading Corporation,  
Silk House, Girgaum Road, Bombay-2.
71. M/s. R. & G. Advani & Co., Estate Agents,  
Sindhu House, 3/5 Nanabhoy Lane, Bombay-1.
72. Shri Bhagwan Tolani, Bombay.
73. M/s. Karachi Sweet Mart,  
H. O. 544, Centre Street, Poona-2.
74. Mr. H. J. Buheriwalla,  
3 Parvati Villa, Goli Mar, Poona-1.
75. Mr. H. D. Kripalani,  
34 Woodridge Crescent, Ottawa 14, Ontario.







**EAST AND WEST SERIES**

[ Monthly ]

**An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit**

The "East and West Series" seeks to spread the message of the saints and sages, the prophets and rishis of Humanity. They have appeared in all ages. They have sanctified both East and West.

**Annual Subscription :**

In India :—Rs. 3/-; outside India :—8 s. or \$ 1.50 or equivalent.

Life-subscription :—Rs. 100/- or £ 10 or \$ 30.00.

For a specimen copy send stamps worth 50 P.

Write to :—

The Manager, "EAST AND WEST SERIES,"

10 Sadhu Vaswani Path, Poona-1, (India).

Some of the numbers issued so far :—

- No. 50. Friends of God
- No. 75. Jesus
- No. 76. Albert Schweitzer
- No. 80. The Wisdom of the Rishis
- No. 81. Guru Nanak : God-intoxicated
- No. 82. Dadaji
- No. 83. Guru Gobind Singh
- No. 115. Prophets of Love
- No. 116. Pictures From the Buddha
- No. 117. The One in All
- No. 119. The Living Krishna
- No. 120. The Man of Wisdom
- No. 121. The Hidden Self
- No. 128. The Upanishads and the Modern Man
- No. 132. My Master
- No. 145. The Great Souled Gandhi
- No. 146. Guru Nanak : Glory of India *Each 50 P. or 1s. or 20 cents.*
- No. 77. Three Prophets
- No. 88. The Dedicated Life
- No. 90. A Mystic of Modern India
- No. 91. Torch-bearers
- No. 96. Reflections
- No. 97. Through Darkness to Light
- No. 108. The Voice of a Pilgrim
- No. 110. In the Tapobana
- No. 130. The Way of Service
- No. 134. Whither Humanity ? *Each 75 P. or 1s. 6d. or 30 cents.*
- No. 48. The Voice of Vivekananda
- No. 66. Ten Witnesses
- No. 79. Sons of Krishna
- No. 87. Education : What India Needs
- No. 100. Born to Serve *Each Rs. 1/- or 2s. or 30 cents.*
- No. 106. Life is Endless
- No. 113. Kindle the Light!
- No. 123. The Rishi
- No. 136. The Heart of the Gita *Each Rs. 2/- or 4s. or 80 cents.*